



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07577251 1

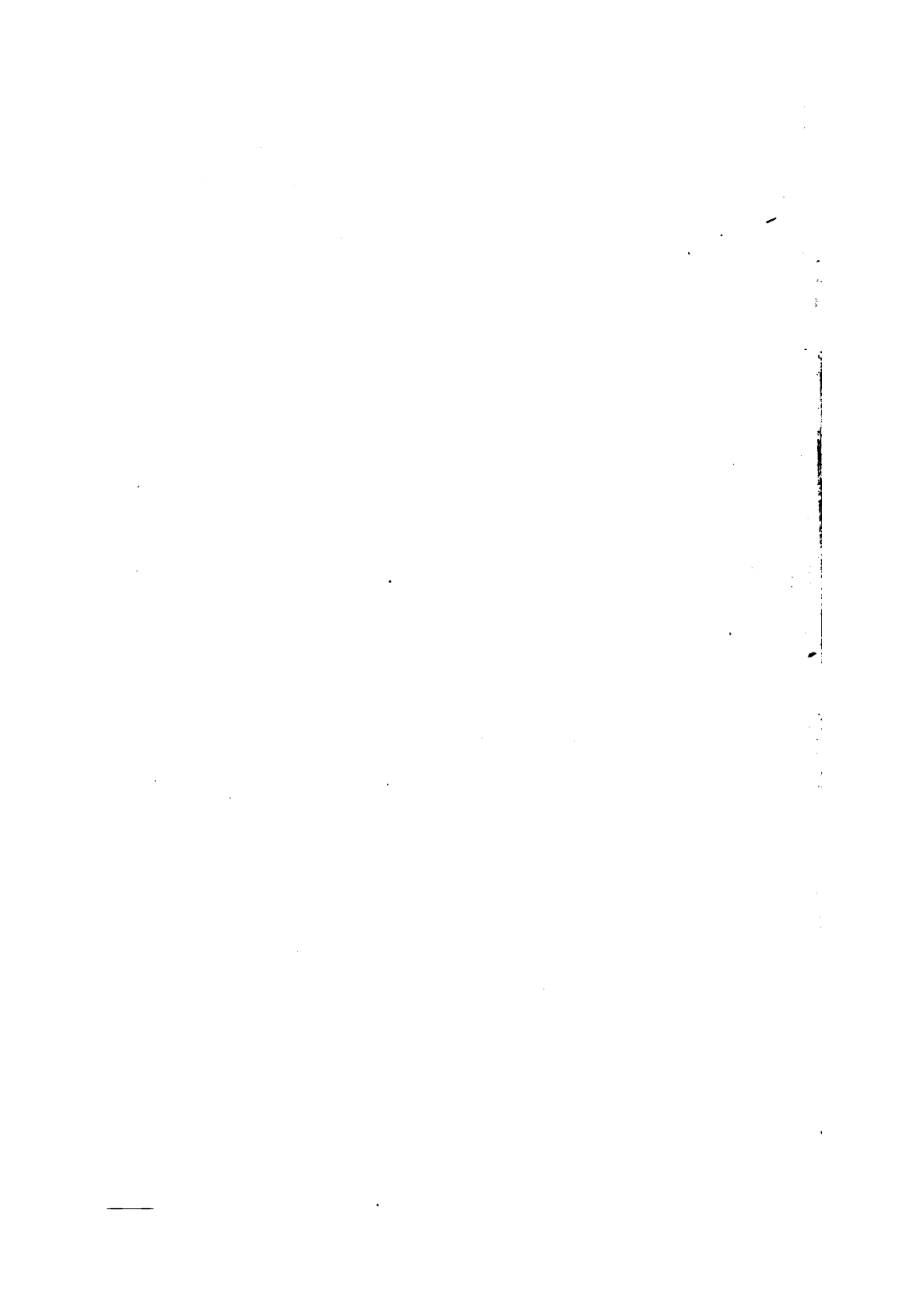
Paul De Fere

ANTHONY E. WILLS

1. No subject,

Caroline Candida

NCW



MONSIEUR
PAUL DE FERÉ

BY
ANTHONY E. WILLS

THE
Abbey Press

PUBLISHERS

114

FIFTH AVENUE

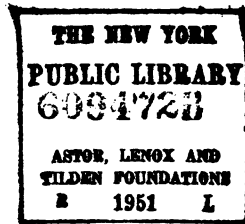
London

NEW YORK

Montreal

[1901]

mrs



Copyright, 1901,
by
THE
Abbey Press

TO MY
BELOVED MOTHER
Mrs. Emilie R. Wills
IS THIS BOOK
DEDICATED.

CONTENTS.

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Biographical Note..... | 7 |
| PROLOGUE. In London..... | 9 |
| I. In the Shadow of Notre Dame | 17 |
| II. Monsieur Paul de Fere..... | 25 |
| III. Unpleasant News..... | 32 |
| IV. An Investigation..... | 39 |
| V. Memories | 45 |
| VI. John Grunty's Tavern..... | 51 |
| VII. An Unwelcome Missive..... | 66 |
| VIII. The Engagement | 73 |
| IX. The Fall of Innocence..... | 79 |
| X. An Obstacle to Overcome | 95 |
| XI. An Undelivered Letter | 103 |
| XII. One Who knows..... | 111 |
| XIII. Pierre's Resort | 118 |
| XIV. The Palais Club | 127 |
| XV. A Night at the Opera | 135 |
| XVI. Troubled Minds | 142 |
| XVII. Meeting of Old Friends | 150 |
| XVIII. An Exciting Episode | 157 |
| XIX. Stratagem..... | 162 |
| XX. At the Bourgete Mansion..... | 168 |
| XXI. Drawing Near the End..... | 174 |
| XXII. The Banking Institute..... | 180 |
| XXIII. New Discoveries | 188 |
| XXIV. A Week Later..... | 194 |
| XXV. The Truth at Last..... | 201 |



ANTHONY E. WILLS

and the

De

• Mr. [Name] [Address]

St. [City]

Christ [Name] [Address]

has been [Name] [Address] [City] [State] [Country] [Zip]
is at present a member of several press clubs and
the President of the "Amateur Press Association
of North America," the largest organization of its
kind in this country.

[Name] [Address]



AN200

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

MR. ANTHONY E. WILLS, the author of this book, was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., on the first day of December, 1880, and after a public school education went West and resided for several years in different parts of Illinois and Wisconsin. Returning to Brooklyn in 1894, he evinced signs of becoming a clever writer of fiction. From that year to the present he has devoted much of his time to the writing of short stories and dramatic sketches, this being his first attempt in so long an effort. Some of the best of his short stories are "The Queen's Letter," "Stratagem," "The Portsmouth Light," "Memories," "The Saddle Inn," "A Queer Life Saver," "The Artist's Dilemma," and "His Last Christmas." Though young in years Mr. Wills has had no little experience in the literary field, and is at present a member of several press clubs and the President of the "Amateur Press Association of North America," the largest organization of its kind in this country.

THE PUBLISHERS.

1998

MONSIEUR PAUL DE FERE.

PROLOGUE.

IN LONDON.

ALL London had been somewhat startled by the announcement of the approaching marriage of Lord Desbrow and Lady Rosabel Gray, which had appeared and been read with eager eyes in all the leading newspapers of the day. For weeks the papers had published accounts of what the bride would wear ; the histories of both historic families and who would be honored with invitations to the reception, which promised to excel, both in elegance and wealth, anything that had preceded it in the annals of English aristocracy.

The night of the great social event arrived. Those of the élite of the vast metropolis of London, who had been fortunate enough to receive invitations were there in all their grandeur. At every new arrival could be heard the haughty voice of the announcer, as he proclaimed the respective names of the distinguished guests, who were welcomed by the bride and bridegroom in a very cordial manner.

"Hilton Barrymore" was now announced, and a slight commotion resulted throughout the company, for it had long been known that Hilton Barrymore had been the former suitor of Lady Gray and that he had been refused by her parents, on asking for her hand, because he was not of noble birth, although he was known to be of the highest social standing and a man of great wealth.

The gossips had it, nevertheless, that something more than a warm friendship still existed between Lady Gray and Hilton Barrymore. Thus the commotion at his announcement.

He entered the room in a somewhat nervous manner, not thinking himself capable of overpowering the many emotions that existed in his breast, at beholding the object of his former love. With a great effort, however, he controlled himself and returned the courteous greeting which he received from the brilliant assemblage, though he appeared to have observed the look of triumph which appeared on Lord Desbrow's countenance as the two suddenly came face to face.

After the ceremonies were over and the many congratulations had been bestowed upon the happy pair, as they appeared to be, the guests began to depart. Carriage after carriage had driven away, and the once grand gathering had dwindled down

to a mere resemblance of its former self. Still Hilton lingered and continued to sit in a corner of the spacious hall in the shadow of large palms, where he was secluded, as it were, from the gaiety without. He appeared sad and downcast, and even as he sat here in the darkness a frown could have been seen to cross his fair brow. This night had changed him greatly, for his eyes, which had once possessed a cheerful expression, now resembled those of one who had been sadly disappointed. He was one of the last to leave, and as he descended the marble staircase leading to the court below, the large clock in the entrance hall tolled forth the hour of midnight and the dawn of a new day.

II.

Two years have passed. Many changes have taken place. In this period, both happiness and sadness have reigned. An heiress to the noble house of Desbrow had been born, which extreme joy could not forestall nor overshadow the great misfortune that befell Lord Desbrow a few months later, the death of his wife, the loss of all that was dear to him.

The kind and gentle nature of Lord Desbrow was materially changed by his great loss, from that of the happiest of men to one of the most sorrowful.

Society had little or no charms for him now. He rarely hunted and cared little for pleasures of any sort. He was often known to lock the door of his study and remain there for hours at a time, giving himself up to the most painful of his thoughts.

He had resolved that, whatever else should happen, his child should be properly cared for, and to that end had placed her in a private nursery, to which he made daily visits.

A strong friendship suddenly appeared to exist between Hilton Barrymore and Lord Desbrow, and rarely a night passed without a visit to the mansion from the former. As a cause of this, Hilton gained the confidence of Lord Desbrow, who confided many of his secrets to him.

Hilton had lost a great amount of money in poor speculation of late, and his wealth had greatly depreciated. On one occasion, while at the mansion, he learned partially through accident that his lordship had on that day negotiated the sale of a large amount of stocks, and, the transaction having been completed after banking hours, he had been compelled to place the money in his strong box, with the intention of depositing it in the bank on the morrow. Hilton gave this matter little thought at the time, but as the conversation progressed on money matters, he found courage to tell the lord

that a note which he had made for a considerable amount would fall due in a few days and that he would probably have to secure a loan from him. Lord Desbrow promptly promised to loan him the desired amount, saying at the same time "that Hilton Barrymore could command much of his wealth." Hilton thanked Lord Desbrow heartily and the subject of conversation changed.

Toward midnight, Hilton took his leave, and his hearty "Good night" was returned in a like manner by Lord Desbrow. As Hilton entered the hall he encountered one of Lord Desbrow's servants passing to the servants' floor above. Knowing the house perfectly, he volunteered to find his way out alone. He reached the bottom staircase and opened the door, when of a sudden he halted abruptly, a frown appearing on his brow, and at the same time he began musing to himself.

"No, no, I can't do it. Why does this devil's thought possess me? But yet, I could pay the note and save myself from beggary. No, no; Lord Desbrow promised to loan me the money if I needed it. No, I can't do it." He made as if to step out into the night when he again halted as before. "Oh, God, why can't I think of something else? My brain seems in a whirl. Yet—why not, does he not owe me much? I hate him. Was it not he that

was the first cause of my downfall? But for him I might have married Rosabel and been happy. I'll—do it."

Closing the door with a loud noise, as if he had passed out, he stood in silence for several moments to see whether his supposed going out had caused any commotion above. Not a sound was to be heard. He now stealthily retraced his steps and was soon on the landing above. Here he paused again. From the streak of light which issued from beneath the door he was forewarned that the candle had not yet been extinguished. Suddenly all was darkness. After an interval of perhaps half an hour, in which no sound disturbed the nightly stillness, he approached the library door, which to his satisfaction he found unlocked. Noiselessly pushing it open he entered and stood still to accustom his eyes to the glarish light of the moon, which cast its shadow on the polished floor. From the inner room he could hear the deep breathing of Lord Desbrow, which plainly told that he was sleeping soundly within. The moon's rays through the half-open window directed him to the object of his search. With great caution he obtained the key from Lord Desbrow's waistcoat, which he found lying on the back of a chair, and approaching the strong box he placed the key in the lock. A few mo-

ments' diligent work and the door swung open with a loud creaking sound. He stopped suddenly and held his breath, then hearing nothing, he resumed his work. Having secured the money and concealed it on his person, he was about to make his escape. During his work, however, he had failed to observe the tall figure of Lord Desbrow, who had been awakened by the noise of the opening of the strong box door, and who, having arisen, had closed the door of the study and was now standing, revolver in hand, behind him as he worked at the strong box door. Hilton arose, and turning around came face to face with him whom he most dreaded to meet. For the first time Lord Desbrow beheld the face of the midnight marauder.

"Great God!" escaped from his trembling lips as he dropped his revolver to the floor and stood spell-bound to the spot.

Seized with fear and frenzy, Hilton dashed at his more elderly opponent, and with the strength of a madman hurled him to the other side of the room. Lord Desbrow fell heavily, striking his head on the heavy oaken table. A low moan escaped from his lips and silence again reigned.

For a moment Hilton listened, then hurried from the scene of his crime. He gained the staircase and hurried on. Once on the bottom landing it took

16 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

him very little time to open the door and issue out into the night, where the cool air refreshed his shattered thoughts and gave him time to mutter, " 'Tis done, but thank heaven there was no witness to the deed." A moment later he was lost in the darkness.

Could he have seen the figure of the servant, whom he had met earlier in the evening, emerge from behind the door of Lord Desbrow's library and softly creep to the servants' floor above, would he have been so sure of his words ?

CHAPTER I.

IN THE SHADOW OF NOTRE DAME.

It was night, and no doubt one of the coldest that had visited the great and beautiful city of Paris for over a quarter of a century. It had rained since early morning and toward the evening had started to snow, which with the cold gusts of wind that were being continually wafted over the city from the River Seine, did not add any pleasantness to the weather, and the three combined elements had little trouble in keeping the streets in utter desolation. One's business had to be very urgent, indeed, to bring him forth on such a night as this.

Hurrying on his course as best he could, might here and there be seen the lonely pedestrian who had dared venture out, making his way to his destination.

Ten o'clock and the streets were deserted. Here and there could be seen the blue glare of the street-lamps as they flickered in the wind, threatening to go out at any moment and leave the streets in darkness, for as much light as they did afford was just sufficient to enable any one abroad at this late hour to reach his abode.

18 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Notre Dame Square appeared entirely deserted, and even the magnificent cathedral, after which the square is named, had a gloomy aspect. The two massive square towers that so worthily crown the principal façade stood out, however, as if in defiance of the wind and the shadow of night. Viollet de Duc, the wonderful architectural genius who in 1879 completed the restoration of this majestic and imposing building, would have been visibly astounded could he have seen the appearance of the massive structure as it appeared in the darkness of this night.

A close observer might have noticed, had he looked in the direction of the cathedral, the tall, slim figure of a man clothed in a long black cloak well wrapped around his form, with hat drawn over his eyes, standing in the shadow of one of the huge pillars of Notre Dame, evidently awaiting the arrival of some one. He seemed impatient, and well he might be, for the piercing winds were not to be easily avoided, and the heavy wearing apparel of this stranger were little, if any, protection against their mightier foe, the wind.

He was a man of about middle age ; well formed and stockily built ; of good looks and appearance ; and did not look the man one would expect to see lurking in dark shadows on such a night as this, but

In the Shadow of Notre Dame. 19

rather one that would be found in the best clubs and leading society circles.

Glancing every few moments at a large clock, which loomed up in the distance from the steeple of some place of worship, he would become more and more impatient as the time wore on. He also kept looking northerly in the direction of the Rue St. Martin, and must have been possessed with eyes that could pierce the intensest darkness, for he uttered a slight exclamation of satisfaction on one occasion when looking that way, and stepped hastily back as if afraid of being seen.

A few moments later the form of a man is observed wending his way toward the Square, in a manner which at once suggests that he has indulged rather too frequently in spirituous liquors.

Still standing in the darkness, Murdock Montague—for such is the name of the man lurking in the shadow of Notre Dame Cathedral—paused and then of a sudden hurried forward as if coming from the direction of the Rue St. Jacques, which leads into the southerly part of the Square of Notre Dame. Thus both men moved toward each other from opposite directions. An exclamation escaped the lips of Murdock as a collision nearly resulted between the two, and he in feigned surprise remarked:

"Why, is that you, Langford, out at this time of night? And intoxicated? It seems strange that, coming from the club, I should find you in this condition. I thought you in silent repose ere this."

"Oh!" exclaimed Langford as he started and raised his face, which had a look of great anguish upon it. Then as he saw who it was he seemed somewhat reassured and his features changed into something of a pleased look. "Thank heaven it is you." Then as he grew fainter: "Murdock, remove me to some place of refuge where I may procure medical aid, as I——"

"Ah, yes, I know," vouchsafed Murdock with a faint smile, "the wine of which you have been so fond has gone to your head and you suffer much by reason thereof. I know it generally affects me in a like manner. Let me prescribe a good remedy, a little vichy and——"

"For God's sake do not delay longer, but make haste. Do you know that I have been wounded, severely wounded, and have lost much of my life's blood?" faintly whispered Langford as he grasped Murdock for support.

"Wounded, you say?" asked his companion, who became more cruel in his jesting, and who showed that he had little sympathy for his more unfortunate friend. "Can it be that you have, after your

In the Shadow of Notre Dame. 21

many experiences, been struck in the back by a poniard in the hands of an infuriated lover while escorting his fair lady home? I hardly can believe your words."

"O, Murdock, if you could but know the many agonies I am enduring you would help me—and—— Look!" suddenly exclaimed Langford, raising his left hand from his side and holding it in such a position that Murdock could plainly see it. It was covered with blood.

"Yes, yes, I now see you do need help, and that quickly. I am more than sorry that I jested with you, but I will try and make amends for my insincerity. I will assist you to a friend of mine, a doctor, who is always ready to attend a patient who has been hurt in some mysterious manner and who will keep a dumb ear. His silence I am certain can be bought for a moderate fee. Come!" So saying Murdock grasped Langford around the waist, intent on helping him onward, when of a sudden his wounded friend slipped to the snow-covered ground, in a dead faint. Murdock wasted little time in thought, but carried the helpless form of his companion into the darkness and shadow of the great marble pillars of Notre Dame, where he relieved himself of his burden, and stood gazing at the form lying before him.

"And you," muttered he, "are the man that was to confide all his secrets to me. The man to whom I told mine and whom I trusted. For years we have been partners together, and while you have gotten rich through methods which I know little or nothing of, I have remained as poor as when I first entered the partnership. I know now why you desired to leave me so early each evening of late. Why you left me to-night. When to-night you said you were going home, I misbelieved you. Your manner indicated otherwise and I wisely followed you. At first I thought that my mission had been in vain, but later developments have proved the value of my wisdom. No good could have brought you here with a stab wound at this hour of the night, and if it is in my power I will find the cause of your night's mysterious experience."

During this time Murdock had been searching the pockets of his unconscious friend, and while so doing found a large packet of papers and an immense amount of money.

"Ah, at last! At last I've found the object of my search. What's this, a letter, and from Paul—Paul de Fere? It seems strange that so wealthy and powerful a citizen as Paul de Fere should find time to write to my esteemed friend Mr. Harry Langford. Is it possible that he"—pointing to

In the Shadow of Notre Dame. 23

Langford—"knows anything in the life of Paul de Fere? It seems improbable. Yet Langford of late has had large amounts of money about him, which I am positive he did not obtain by——"

Here he was cut short in his reverie by the moaning of Langford, who was delirious in his thoughts.

"That's all right, Barrymore. Oh, never fear—I know all about it, but it was never said that Langford gave away any secrets that he knew. As long as you pay me well I—No, no—Hilton, don't worry on my—For Heaven's sake, Hilton, stop—don't kill me—I—I——" And again silence was supreme.

Murdock had listened attentively to these mutterings, hoping to catch a word or sentence that would betray the secret he so dearly desired to know; and although he tried to induce Langford to speak on, it was a useless task.

He could now hear the heavy tread of the Commissaire of Police as he passed within a few feet of where he and his helpless companion were hidden, and as the sound of the footsteps grew more indistinct he gave a sigh of relief. Murdock continued his search, when of a sudden, Langford, now partially recovered, on beholding Murdock in the act of rifling his pockets, uttered a loud scream. Murdock clapped his hand over Langford's mouth, but

24 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

this had little effect in quelling the noise. Murdock became alarmed at the repeated outcries of his companion, and well he might, for should the sound reach the officer's ears he would certainly be down upon them in a moment, and Murdock would be placed in a most awkward position. As the struggle increased Murdock became more desperate, and drawing a knife, he plunged it deeply into the breast of his already helpless companion. Instantly Langford relaxed his hold and sank back dead.

Murdock, having secured all that was of value on Langford's person, gathered his cloak about him, and then looking sharply in all directions and being certain that no one was about, hurried forth and made his way, in the shadow of the tall trees that line the Seine, in a westerly direction.

A few moments later the officer, having been drawn to the spot by the repeated outcries, came hurriedly on, then, after looking wisely from side to side and observing no one, he again passed on within a few feet of the spot where Langford now remained alone, in death.

CHAPTER II.

MONSIEUR PAUL DE FERÉ.

WE will now go back a few hours previous to the events of the preceding chapter, to the scene of a large drawing-room in a princely mansion on the Boulevard de Sebastopol. The building itself was situated in the center of a large garden which in the summer months was arrayed with flowers and trees of the most varied description. It was considered one of the most beautiful in all Paris. The balcony was supported by huge columns which formed an imposing archway below, leading to the main entrance hall. On entering and looking to the right, could be observed the interior of the reception room, a room of immense dimensions, which was decorated in the most gorgeous manner, with massive gilding, flamboyant scroll work, statues and paintings from the hands of the most distinguished artists of the day.

To the left of the large staircase in the center of the main hall was a large drawing-room, the walls of which were lined with large bookcases that contained thousands of volumes of modern and ancient stories of truth and fiction. Seated at a large

table which was literally covered with a mass of pamphlets and papers of every description, was Monsieur Paul de Fere, a man past the prime of life. The solitary light, at the further end of the table, showed but dimly in this spacious room and only added a gruesome aspect to the scene. The large clock on the mantelpiece, which no doubt if sold at public or private sale would have brought its weight in gold, had just struck the hour of ten, which acted like magic in arousing Monsieur de Fere and making him exclaim, somewhat angrily :

“This must be the last payment. The suspense is becoming unbearable for a man of my years, and I must put a stop to it instantly or suffer the consequences with my life. Why did this man ever cross my path? Was it for my own sake, I would care little, but for her, my Rosabel, I would brave all. Ah, but when I think what little right I have to talk thus, it pains me deeply. Was it not I, who on that fatal night——”

A light tapping on the window here caused him to stop, and turning the light somewhat lower and assuring himself that he could not be seen from without, he hurried to a small door, at the side of the wall of the drawing-room, where he admitted the form of the man with whom we are already

somewhat familiar. Bolting the door and restoring the light, he hurriedly turned and faced the new-comer, who by this time had leisurely seated himself in a large armchair and was now in the act of drawing a cigar from his coat pocket, which he deliberately proceeded to light.

"I am late, but through little fault of mine," exclaimed he in insolent tones as he crossed one leg upon the other and puffed vigorously on his cigar, "for you see when one is placed in such a position as I, he is apt to be called away at any moment."

"Listen to me, Monsieur Langford," exclaimed Paul de Fere impatiently, as he seated himself in his chair, "the object of your coming here to-night is nothing in the line of pleasure for me, and I would suggest that we come to terms as quickly as possible."

"As you will, but I much prefer your society and the inviting warmth of your room to the sharp biting winds and unfriendliness that exists without," assented Monsieur Langford.

"I mean business this night and have little time for tomfoolery. May I ask what sum you desire on this occasion? If I remember aright it does not seem so long since I made you the last payment. Now, what amount do you command to-night?"

"Oh, the same as before—with 10,000 francs added."

"What! 25,000 francs! Why, man, are you mad? That in itself is a fortune, and bank dividends are at present decidedly low.—Besides, I have no such amount in the house at present.—I refuse to pay you any such an enormous sum. You have already extracted not less than 400,000 francs from me in the past sixteen years of our association, and I have decided to pay you no more to keep a secret which, if told, would not be believed by any one."

"So, so, I am to be thrust aside like the chaff in the wind? Probably you think your task an easy one. Let me tell you plainly that you are dreadfully mistaken. Perhaps 'twould please you to have me relate a strange story to the Prefect of Police, and show to the eyes of the world that the honored Monsieur Paul de Fere, the esteemed and wealthy citizen, the President of the De Fere Banking Institute, and one of the prominent leaders of society, is in his true light a fugitive from justice."

"For heaven's sake not so loud, every one in the house will be awakened by your loud tone. Oh, heaven help me, heaven help me! You scoundrel, since you talk like that, I suppose I must compromise and pay you something to keep your

miserable silence, but rest assured I will not meet your exorbitant demand."

"Then suffer the consequences," replied Monsieur Langford, rising as if about to go. He crossed the room to the door by which he had entered, and placing his hand on the knob was about to turn the same, when of a sudden he felt a sharp pain as if a thousand needles had entered the flesh on his side, and he instantly sank to the floor.

"What have I done?" cried Monsieur de Fere as he stood over and beheld the prostrate form of his tormentor. He still held a sharp paper-knife in his hand, and had in his great anger, on beholding Langford about to take his leave, been seized with the most horrible thoughts. With one bound he had grasped the cutter up from the table, and scarcely knowing what he did, had dashed at his unwelcome visitor with the above result.

Langford, who it appeared had not been seriously wounded, with the aid of a chair now regained his feet.

"You came near sending me on a long journey," feebly exclaimed Langford, whose sarcasm had not even abated while suffering extreme agonies but I shall remember your acute kindness toward me."

Monsieur de Fere, who was aware of the folly of his act, now assisted Langford to a chair and offered

him a glass of wine, which did much to revive the latter's spirits, and he was soon much like himself again.

"I sincerely regret and repent having acted as I did a few moments ago, but your language was enough to try the patience of Job himself. To make amends, however, I will add to the sum you asked for this evening, of which I will give you one half to-night and the balance on the morrow."

"Agreed!" exclaimed Langford, "but give me the money and I will be off, for I must see to this remembrance of your uncontrollable temper."

From a safe, which stood close by, Monsieur de Fere brought forth the desired amount, and it was eagerly grasped by Langford, whose eyes sparkled as he beheld the large sum in his hands.

"You are not badly injured, are you?" asked Monsieur de Fere, in a quivering voice, who appeared very anxious to know the exact condition of his visitor.

"Mine is but a small, painful wound. 'Tis a mere scratch, and with a little attention will soon heal. You need little fear for me, but you ought to thank heaven that the crime of murder does not rest on your head for to-night's temporary loss of reason."

As Langford finished he buttoned his outer coat well around him and opened the side door. A

heavy gust of wind entered the room as he did so, which plainly told of the coldness of the night. Langford stepped out into the darkness and exclaimed, "Good-night, Paul ; I shall be here on the appointed time to-morrow for the balance." He then proceeded on his way toward Notre Dame, destined to meet with the fatal mishap with which we are already fully familiar.

CHAPTER III.

UNPLEASANT NEWS.

AFTER Langford had taken his departure, Monsieur de Fere hurried off to bed, where in a short time he fell into a restless slumber. Next morning he was awakened shortly after seven o'clock by the clamor of vehicles and the hurrying of feet, as the moving throng of business men passed on their way to their daily toil. The sun shone bright and clear, and had it not been for the slushy streets it might have been considered as one of the finest days of the year.

He arose, and after carefully preparing his toilet, descended to the drawing-room, where he was greeted by his beautiful daughter. Rosabel, for such was her name, was considered by society to be one of the most beautiful of her sex. She was perhaps close on to twenty years, but possessed the intelligence of one double her age. She was of fairest complexion, with large blue eyes and golden hair, which fell in masses over her shapely shoulders, and on this occasion was clothed in a morning gown, which did not add any the less to her exquisite charms.

As her father entered she arose, and casting aside a book which she had been reading, ran forward and embraced him fondly.

"Why, father, how pale you are. Have you been ill during the night?" asked she, observing the careworn look on his countenance, for it must be remembered that the preceding night's thoughts had weighed heavily on his mind.

"No, no, my child. I never slept better in all my life," answered Paul with a false calmness, as he tried to smile.

"Ah, yes, but such a pallid look as you now possess is not the result of a good night's rest. I think, father, and, in fact, I am almost positive, that business of late has not been as prosperous as you would have it? Tell me, is that not the reason of your sad expression? Ah, I know it is. Why don't you go to the mountains for a few weeks; surely the bank can get along without you for so short a period?"

"You have guessed rightly, my child. The season at this time of the year is generally dull and unprofitable, and I must admit that business troubles are causing me some worry; but then let's think no more of this subject. You should not be bothering your little head about such affairs," softly exclaimed her father as he patted her gently on the

34 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

head, trying at the same time to change the topic of conversation.

"But surely your health should be of my affairs. Have you not spent your whole life in trying to make me happy? No, no; I must see that you get a rest. It would be little like love were I not alarmed at your condition. Your thoughts should surely be mine, since you have no one else to confide in."

"Tut tut, little one, you have enough to think of—besides," exclaimed Monsieur de Fere, interrupting himself long enough to wipe away a tear which had gathered in his eye, "if I remember aright, you told me last evening that Mademoiselle Faure, your dressmaker, would expect you at ten. So let us breakfast, and I will then accompany you in the carriage as far as the bank."

As if the words had been heard below, the bell for breakfast now came to their relief, and they descended the large marble staircase together.

They entered the dining salon, and took their accustomed places at the table. As usual, the morning paper was handed Monsieur de Fere, by the servant in attendance, for his perusal.

Glancing hastily over the contents of the first page, which contained for the most part nothing but local news, he was about to turn to the page

which was devoted to the prices of stock, etc., when of a sudden his eyes lighted on something that caused him to start from his chair and turn deathly pale.

"Has anything happened, father?" asked Rosabel, who had witnessed the sudden change in her father's demeanor.

"No, no, 'tis nothing," answered he in a manner which at once showed that he was trying to conceal something. He stared vacantly into space for a few moments, and then suddenly aroused himself and placed the paper which had so affected him in his pocket in a crumpled condition. "I must go at once," continued he in a faltering manner. "Yes, I must go." He arose abruptly, and, without excusing himself, staggered from the room.

Rosabel burst into tears, for she was now certain that some strange secret was the cause of her father's actions. He had been far from himself of late, and this sudden exhibition affected her greatly. Breakfast was now over, for she, like her father, had little relish for the morning meal. Hastily sipping a cup of tea, as a remedy for her extreme nervousness, she arose and hurried to her own room.

Upon entering the drawing-room, Monsieur de Fere sank heavily into a chair. Thus he sat with his head bowed low upon the table. A few mo-

36 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

ments later he slowly drew the crumpled paper from his pocket and placed it on the table before him. He reluctantly stretched out his hands, smoothed the paper, and read the following article again and again, uttering exclamations now and then as he continued in his reading :

“THE CRIME IN THE SHADOW OF NOTRE DAME.

“NOTRE DAME AGAIN THE SCENE OF A HORRIBLE CRIME.

ROBBERY PROBABLY THE MOTIVE.

“PARIS, Nov. 18—Toward daybreak an officer, while patrolling his post of duty, discovered in the shadow of one of the large pillars of the Cathedral of Notre Dame the body of a man.

“The body is that of a man about forty years of age; of small, robust stature, and was clothed in garments that could not have been worn but by a person of large means. The body was found lying somewhat exposed to view on the marble walk, under the balcony which extends around the impressive building. On close inspection it was dis-

covered that the deceased had met his death as the result of two stab wounds, one in the breast, which in all probability was the fatal one, and the other a somewhat deep but not necessarily fatal wound below the heart.

"The body was removed to headquarters, where it was found that the pockets had been ransacked, and that everything of value had been taken by the assassin, or assassins.

"Upon the detail of several of the prominent detectives of the city on the case, it was discovered that an almost obliterated trail of blood in the snow led in the direction of the Boulevard Sebastopol, as far north as the Rue Ramberteau, where it was lost to view."

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Monsieur de Fere, as he stopped each time he read this paragraph, for it must be confessed he believed himself the murderer of Langford, and although he feared that the trail of blood would be his undoing, still he had consolation and great hope in the fact that the bloody trail did not lead to his drawing-room. He was greatly puzzled, however, as to how the murdered man could have had two stab wounds, when he was almost certain he had inflicted but one. Still he remembered that he had struck while in a

38 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

rage, and that possibly he might have thrust twice. He continued reading :

“What is most puzzling to the police is that a large number of footprints exist in the snow where the murdered man was found, as if a struggle had taken place. It is deemed mysterious how the trail of blood could lead up the Boulevard Sebastopol and the many footprints exist in the snow at the base of Notre Dame. Surely the dying man, after his long journey through the Boulevard, could not have made them.

“The police have resolved to sift the matter to the bottom, and it is thought that they have several clues which will eventually lead to the detection of the murderer or murderers.

“Later :—The body has been identified as that of Monsieur H. Langford, a well-known sporting character, who has been a resident of this city for some years.”

The paper fell from the hands of Paul de Fere on the completion of his fifth reading of the article which told him so much, and he feared that he would eventually be discovered.

For a time he sat with head bowed, and then being unable to longer withhold his emotions, he gave way and found relief in a flood of sobs.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INVESTIGATION.

MURDOCK continued his course in the shadow of the trees that line the banks of the Seine after leaving Notre Dame, until he emerged into the Rue des St. Pères, and turning into this street, halted before a large house and entered with the aid of a night key. Making his way as cautiously as possible, so as not to arouse any of its inmates, he ascended to his apartments, which were situated on the second floor, overlooking a large garden at the rear of the house.

Entering with as little noise as possible, for he desired to keep his late home-coming a secret, he removed his waistcoat and lit the lamp, which had been conveniently placed for his return, proceeding at the same time to an inner room that had no windows, where he then closed the door. It was now time to act. He hurriedly removed his blood-stained clothing and concealed them in the bottom of a large trunk, then untying the string which held together the large bundle of papers which he had secured from Langford's person, he placed the money in a trap compartment in the corner of the

room and then examined with great care the various documents.

Here were found letters signed "Paul" and others, presumably copies of letters sent in return, signed simply with the initials "H. L." This did not at first prove much, and after scrutinizing and studying the majority closely, he was about to complete his task, when his ever-watchful eye espied one that immediately absorbed his attention. It seemed to be of great importance, for he carefully read the same, which was as follows, over and over again.

"L. H.

"Your note of the 10th inst. received. Would in reply state, that I have succeeded after much difficulty in securing the required amount. Call at 11 P. M. Will be expecting you at that hour.

(Signed) "PAUL."

Another which he lingered over read thus :

"L. H.

"Be cautious when writing me, and above all things do not again refer to the Desbrow affair in your letters, as the mail is apt to interception.

"P."

To the casual reader this would prove nothing,

but to a man like Murdock Montague the smallest clue would lead to great discoveries. With a smile upon his rather pleasant-looking countenance, he continued his search, and found among other things a badly-crumpled clipping from a newspaper in an envelope that contained many others. The fact that it was much the worse for wear as the result of continued handling, gave him new curiosity for observing it more closely.

“PARIS, Aug. 18.—London police are still in quest of the murderer of Lord Hugh Desbrow. Hilton Barrymore, who has been suspected from the first, has entirely disappeared and has not been seen since the night of the crime, nearly seven years ago.”

This he read again and again, but it was too indefinite for his purpose, and having completed his search, he carefully placed the papers in the bottom of the trunk and sat in silence for a time pondering to himself. At last he muttered :

“’Tis indeed a strange affair. There is some deep mystery here or else I am greatly mistaken, for why should Paul de Fere be in such close communication with Langford. The latter evidently knew some family secret of the house of De Fere. Ah, yes, and if I remember aright did not Langford,

42 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

in his delirium, continually call on some one named Hilton Barrymore not to kill him ? Ah," exclaimed he, as he suddenly thought of the newspaper clipping he had read, " the name of Barrymore becomes more and more involved in this mystery, for in the clipping it is inferred that he was the murderer of Lord—Lord Hugh Desbrow. What connection did Langford have with this crime ? Did he have a hand in the work ? He never made reference to it in our long association, and if he was connected with the same in any way, he kept it a very guarded secret. Let me think. I have surely heard that name Desbrow before, but where, where ? Ah, if I could recall aright, Langford made some reference to a former employer, occasionally, by whom he was employed as a domestic. But his name—what was that ? I must get my shattered wits together, for this night's, or rather last night's, work has greatly unstrung them. Let me see—Desbrow—D-e-s-b-r-o-w. Ah, yes, yes, the very same. Can it be that Hilton Barrymore and Paul de Fere have any close relation ? I hardly believe it. But yet what reason had Langford for demanding money, such enormous sums, of Paul de Fere ? Surely it must have been some great secret. By putting the facts already in my possession together I begin to glean the truth. But I have not yet obtained enough evidence to

present myself. It might be that I could write Monsieur De Fere an anonymous letter telling him that I know all and that if he does not pay me handsomely, I will inform the authorities. No, that would hardly do. He might become startled at first, if guilty, and make an appointment, then on asking me questions which I could not answer, he could denounce me as a blackmailer and have me prosecuted. Again, was he innocent of any wrongdoing, on my writing him the letter, he could quietly inform the police, and then as a ruse advise me to meet him at some rendezvous and the result would be the same as in the first case. No, no, I must bide my time. I believe there is something behind it all. Facts must be learned that will make my chain of evidence unending. 'Twould be best for me to journey to London and make inquiries in the vicinity of this Desbrow mansion, if the same still exists. In this way I might learn much. However, I will think no more of the matter to-night ; it is now sunrise and I am sorely in need of rest. I will make the trip to London to-day, after a short sleep. I know I will have need of all the wits I possess in this interesting affair."

Murdock then prepared to retire and a half-hour later he was fast asleep. Murderer and deep-dyed villain that he was, he had little difficulty in ob-

44 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

taining the sleep of a new-born babe. He did not awake until the morning was well advanced, then after a hasty repast, he ordered his luggage prepared, and notifying his housekeeper that he would be absent from the city for a few days, made his way to the railway station.

CHAPTER V.

MEMORIES.

WE will now leave Murdock speeding on his way to London and return to the house of Paul de Fere.

Rosabel remained in her room the entire day, after witnessing her father's strange actions at the breakfast table that morning, allowing no one to disturb her. For some time she had suspected that everything was not as it should be, and the scene she had beheld that morning had more than reassured her in her suspicions. The one other thought that possessed her was that of a young man, Victor Gasgoine by name. They had known each other since childhood, for upon the death of his parents, with whom her father had been intimately acquainted, Victor when still nothing but a boy had been taken into the employ of the banking institution of which her father was the president. Working with the utmost skill, industry and integrity, he had been advanced, one position at a time, until he now held the honored and responsible position of cashier. Being desirous of improving his learning, he had spent large sums of money on his

education. As a result he was not possessed of such resources as he would have preferred to have been.

For years, Victor had come almost daily to call on her, and on these occasions she was very happy, for in him she could confide and his kind and sympathetic advice always reassured and comforted her. When he was gone, the brightness which had almost dazzled her became as dark as hitherto. She would sit in silence, thinking of the time when they would always be happy.

Her thoughts reverted to a happy space of time they had enjoyed. She remembered how, a few years ago, Victor had become overworked, from performing his laborious duties in the bank, and had taken refuge in a small but beautiful villa near the Trossach Mountains in Scotland for a short period of rest and recuperation. How, on his recommendation, her father had also been persuaded to journey there for a short season's recreation. In this delightful spot they had learned to love each other better than ever before. Oh, what bliss they here enjoyed!—what happy days they spent together! She thought of how they used to wander down to the river's side, and after unloosening the little boat, how they would spend delightful hours on the bosom of the noble little stream, watching

the birds flying hither and thither in their merry and songful flight of freedom ; or on other occasions fishing ; or idly talking for long sunny hours, as the diminutive bark moved rapidly over the tiny waves, leaving a trail of whitest foam behind as they paddled along.

How at other times she would mount her pony, the sleekest and most docile of animals, and with Victor as attendant, scour the neighboring country, hastening over the beautiful fields, giving free rein to her little animal and yielding herself up to all the inspiring influences of place and time. What admiration he bore for the brown riding-habit and the fawn-colored beaver with the floating feather, she usually wore on these excursions. She remembered, when assisting her to the ground, after such rides, how he would retain her hands, pressed tightly in his own, for several moments at a time until she would feign anger and surprise ; how once or twice, when not attending closely to his duty of receiving the small slipper in his riding gauntlet, she was precipitated into his strong arms. At such times, so assiduous was his care that she should not suffer injury, that he would not release her until she was safely on her feet. Ah ! those were indeed days of joy, and she was indeed sad when the summer ended and they were obliged to return to Paris.

48 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

After their return, however, Victor made as frequent visits as of yore, and in their hearts they still possessed the same love. She thought now of one evening, as she sat by Victor's side, how he had taken her willing hand in his and looking down into her face had said,

"Rosabel, do you love me?"

She gave no answer to his low earnest voice for a time, but her passionate woman's love showed in her eyes and lighted up her beautiful face until it was that of an angel's, so radiant and glorified, and he drew her slowly to his breast and they were very still. Then as he held her thus, how he poured forth eager, loving words, her eyes flashing, her bosom heaving, her white hands trembling, as he told his love.

"Rosabel, do you love me?" again asked he in softest tones, as her heart beat rapidly and she paused. The one word he so desired to hear was then uttered, which made him the happiest of men, the one word "Yes."

The winter came at last and their love was as of yore. Victor had not as yet asked her father for her hand, fearing the result, as he knew that her father wished her to marry some one of nobility or of great wealth, and although he appeared to admire Victor, he did not look upon him as an acceptable

suitor for his daughter's hand. They resolved, however, that nothing should part them, and on this afternoon, as Rosabel sat thinking of past days, her determination to that end increased.

It was now dusk, and for the first time during the day she ventured below to the drawing-room, where she sat near the window, in the increasing darkness, staring into the garden.

The door behind softly opened unobserved by her, and the figure of a young man appeared on the threshold with a handsome bouquet of violets in his hand. In a moment he stood within the room, hesitating as to his next move. We here find time to observe the stranger. He is a man of about twenty-five years of age, of large muscular proportions and light sandy hair. An ideal athlete you would say. But beneath his somewhat rugged outward appearance of great strength and determination we find the heart of a kind and gentle nature. His eyes glisten, for our newcomer is none other than Victor Gasgoine, as he beholds his love, Rosabel, with her back turned toward him as if looking from the window. He hesitates upon making a step forward and listens. A faint sound reaches his ears. Can it be possible? Was Rosabel weeping? Again and again those sobs, suppressed but deep and convulsive. As he paused,

50 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

uncertain what to do, she moved, half raised herself, and clasped her hands meekly, breathing at the same time softly.

“My poor father. I wonder what can affect him so greatly? If Victor were here I would tell him my——”

He had advanced on tip-toe, and suddenly grasping her in his arms cut short her moanings. She was startled and confused for a moment, but all unnerved and trembling, she could not reserve herself longer; and when she had wept her tears out on his bosom, and his heart had melted itself over her grief, she told him all.

He listened attentively, and when she had concluded, comforted and told her that he would not see her unkindly treated; that he would keep their engagement a secret no longer; that he would, this very night if possible, ask her father for her hand; then, let his answer be what it might, they would get married at once, whether with his consent or no. They had thus resolved and were clasped in each other's arms when the servant, Joseph, appeared with the light and ended their meeting.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN GRUNTY'S TAVERN.

IN due course of time, Murdock reached London. The sun was just going to rest as the train entered the big city, and being desirous of learning all that he possibly could as soon as practicable, he set out almost immediately for the home of the late Lord Desbrow. It was easily learned how to reach the mansion, but not such an easy task to accomplish the getting there, for it must be known that it was situated in one of the suburbs some distance from the metropolis.

Desiring to keep his object as great a secret as possible, he determined to travel by foot, for he thought that should he engage a vehicle to convey him to his destination, it would be more than probable that the driver would become inquisitive to know the reason of his strange visit.

A few hours of laborious traveling brought him to an old rusty fence which led to a gate of former magnificence. He had been told by persons he met on the road that this was the Desbrow mansion. Peering through the gate he saw that the garden had once been a beautiful one, but was now

52 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

sorely neglected, for the trees had long been untrimmed and had spread their branches in wild confusion. Here and there large wild brush of various descriptions grew in relief, and the grass, which was now dried, stood almost two feet from the ground.

Little care and the elements had done their work well and everything looked uncared for. Murdock could scarcely comprehend that this was the place he had traveled miles to see. He had expected something quite different from the scene he now beheld. Here and there large wooden signs were nailed to trees, on which were painted letters, in black, stating that the place was "To Let" or "For Sale." Already they must have hung there for quite some time, for they also had become rather weather-beaten. He looked and wondered, for it seemed strange that such a one-time marvelously beautiful place should be so utterly desolated. Windows and shutters were broken in many places. Opening the gate, which made a creaking noise, he entered the garden. He saw that the foundation of the main building was badly cracked in places and looked as though it might at any time give way under its weight, bringing after it the mass of stone and plaster which it supported. Moss grew in many instances from these cracks, which added all

the more to the weird spectacle before him. He now nearly stumbled over a heap of white stones, as it at first appeared, but on looking more closely he saw that what had once been beautiful statuary now lay before him a mass of broken and battered marble. Surely, thought he, some strange mystery must be the reason for all this. Night had now overtaken him. He climbed through a window at the rear of the house and entered a large room. He had come without a lantern of any kind, so hurriedly had he taken his leave from Paris, and he more than regretted his lack of preparation. He saw that he would have to learn as much as he could with the aid of match light, and luckily he had provided himself with quite a stock of matches. He struck one and beheld before him in the dim light a room of large dimensions. The carpet, or what remained of it, was badly torn and eaten by vermin in places; there was little if any furniture in the room and the floor was covered with a thick covering of white substance, which, on looking above, he discovered was the plaster from the once beautifully frescoed ceiling, that had become loosened through dampness and had fallen to the floor. The match then went out, leaving him in utter darkness. He saw that his work would be slow and tedious if accomplished by the aid of matches, but still he determined to keep

54 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

on. He lighted another and another, but could find nothing in this room which was of value to him. He made a thorough examination of all the rooms on the main floor and found every one of them bare of furniture and anything of value. Climbing the huge marble staircase, which was the one remaining thing that had not been molested by human beings or the hand of God, he ventured into a large room to his left. Striking a match, he beheld before him a scene of great pillage.

This room had presumably been the drawing-room, for the papers which were scattered in all directions on the floor plainly told that. Just before the match went out he noticed a large oaken bookcase, which had been upset and was lying face downward on the floor. The books were lying about in wild confusion, and many had been torn literally to pieces and thrown over the tiled floor. As he was about to strike another match, he was startled by hearing a noise as if some one was in the act of walking on the floor above. For a moment he became visibly frightened and stood still, trying to discern, if possible, the cause of the noise. He had just passed the idea from his mind and was about to resume his search when a heavy peal of thunder and a vivid streak of lightning made him hurry to an adjoining window. Looking through it,

he saw that a heavy rain storm was battling without. For a few moments he watched the storm. The wind was blowing furiously and the rain was falling in veritable sheets. He was at least thankful to be in a place of shelter, and determined to remain in the old mansion for the night unless the storm abated ere long.

He struck match after match, but made slow progress in his search, and had almost given up hope of finding anything to his advantage, for, just as he would be intensely interested in some missive or other, the light of the match would be burnt to his finger tips and he would have to drop the ignited tinder in great haste. His stock of matches was also getting exceedingly low; and he decided that he would have to postpone the continuance of his search until the following day. Being extremely fatigued from his day's journey and the cold that now existed, he stretched himself very uncomfortably on the sofa, which was nothing but a shadow of its former self, and slept in a restless manner.

During the night he was not disturbed, and slept until the rays of the morning sun shone on his face through the uncurtained window and awakened him. Looking out he beheld quite a contrast to the weather of the night before, for it was a beauti-

ful day. His watch told him that it was not yet six o'clock. It was intensely cold and he hastily continued his search of the preceding night, wishing to accomplish his work in the quickest possible manner.

In the room in which he had rested he found many old letters, which were eagerly read, but they told him very little that he wanted to know. He often came across passages in these letters, however, that mentioned Hilton Barrymore, in which the latter was spoken of in the highest terms. Sometimes he would read letters which made references to a child, as, "My one remaining hope is my child," and "I saw the little darling this morning and was more impressed with the thought that she so resembles her dead mother."

This told him very little, but gave him facts which he made a note of in a small book he carried.

Climbing to the top floor, he gave all the rooms a thorough examination, but found nothing of importance, and now began to think that his journey to London would be a fruitless one.

Toward evening, being hungry, cold, and thoroughly worn out, he completed his task, which had revealed almost nothing new to him, and started on his return to the city. Had he met a wagon or any

kind of conveyance that could have taken him to some hotel or the like he would have been more than thankful, for he was now possessed with the rare appetite of one who has not partaken of food for almost twenty-four hours. The heavy wind that was blowing as incessantly as ever, seemed bent on retarding his travel as much as possible, and he was thus struggling along in no pleasant frame of mind, brooding over his ill luck and foolishness in coming to London, when his ever-watchful eye espied the sign of a tavern, in the distance, which worked miracles in making of him a new man.

A few moments later he beheld before him an old-fashioned gabled-roof tavern. A sign which protruded from over the door told him that John Grunty was its proprietor. The exterior looked more than inviting, and here, thought he, was rare fortune, for he was now almost certain of a good old-fashioned English dinner and a pot of old ale. He did not linger long, and upon entering beheld a room of low ceiling, while heavy tables and chairs were placed at either side, and large barrels of the renowned ale were placed at the further end of the room on racks made for that purpose. Looking to his left he saw a group of quaint, old-fashioned people, who, although so near a city of new and enterprising ideas as that of London, at this late

58 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

day still retained the customs and habits of their forefathers.

The host, John Grunty, now advanced and cordially shook hands with Murdock, and on being informed of his wants, ushered him into the dining hall. Here, as before, Murdock beheld a low ceiling and heavy tables, but the latter were a necessity here, as he was soon to learn. The maiden who waited on the table placed before him a repast the like of which he had never before had the pleasure of partaking, and which, set off with the flagon of ale, invested him with new life.

It was darkest night without as he completed his hearty repast and the heavy wind still prevailed, while a few flakes of snow now and then promised a greater storm. He therefore informed the host that he would remain for the night, at which the face of the stout old gentleman betook a broad smile, for though his house was always well patronized, it was seldom that it sheltered so finely dressed a gentleman as Murdock was.

Several of the habitués of the tavern still remained in the main room, chatting and sitting over their bowls of punch, for the warm hearth was most inviting. Now and then an old English song nearly lifted the rafters from their fastenings, but made the assemblage appear only the merrier. Murdock,

though he had almost given up the idea of his object in journeying to London, thought it would do no harm to learn what he could from these peasants. So joining their midst he ordered their bowls refilled. At once he could have commanded of them to do what he pleased, for he was looked upon as one of their own sort and a hale fellow well met. A familiarity existed between them at once, and as he seemed so eager to listen to their homespun tales, he had their utmost confidence.

For a time he was silent, giving full ear to their conversation, when at last he ventured to say :

“By the way, gentlemen, on my journey here I passed a mansion, or I presume it was one at some former time, which looked as though some strange tale was the cause of its desolation.”

“Aye, aye; of the Desbrow grounds you speak,” interposed one of the stoutest of the party, as he looked wise and adjusted a pair of spectacles, which he had previously been furiously wiping with a large red handkerchief. “Ah, ’tis many years that the place has thus been deserted. Aye, ever since the old lord was murdered in it,—nigh to twenty years ago,—what say you, John?” asked he of the host, who was standing close by amicably smoking his long-stemmed clay pipe.

"'Twas about that time ago, but I'm not so sure of the date," answered the host, John Grunty.

"Murdered, you say," exclaimed Murdock in feigned surprise, although he was considerably taken back as he remembered he had passed the night before in a house in which a murder had been committed.

"Aye, murdered. Brutally murdered by one whom he thought to be his best friend. A coward by the name of Barrymore—but there is great length to the tale," spoke our first friend as he drained his bowl of punch, and who evidently desired a little coaxing before he would continue his story.

"I should like very much to hear the story from so clever a narrator as you. It must be decidedly interesting," now said Murdock, who saw a chance of learning something. After a pause he continued to the host, "Here, fill up the bowls of my good friends. They must be as thirsty as myself."

Encouraged by these words, the stout man volunteered to tell the story, and after sipping leisurely of the punch for a time, and whiffing furiously at his pipe, he settled himself on his stool and began.

"'Twas as I said, nigh to twenty years, since that eventful night, but we must go back some two years earlier to get all of the tale. There was, as always is, a woman in the case, who was not entirely

to blame if I say it myself, for she loved a young chap, Barrymore by name, who was refused by her parents because he was not of noble birth, or something of the sort. Instead her parents compelled her to marry a royal chap, a good fellow, Lord Desbrow, who was a man of great wealth and nobility. Lord Desbrow was a fine gentleman, and for a long time I was a hand on the grounds, but my old trouble, the gout, was too much for me and I had to get out for a younger lad. Well, to course on my tale: Barrymore, the cursed fellow's life was wrecked, as is always the wont, but happiness did not hover long over the Desbrow house, for after the birth of her child, the mistress, Lady Gray, died. Lord Desbrow became despondent and I seldom saw him out driving, or, in fact, out at all. He placed the child in a nursery. Ah, it seemed strange to us all at the time, that men who had been enemies in love should become such close friends, but thus it was and"—here the story-teller halted and quenched his thirst, at the same time he whiffed furiously for some minutes at his stem pipe and then continued, "Barrymore and the lord became close friends—though I think it was more of design on Barrymore's part. One evening, about two years after the lady's death, Lord Desbrow was murdered, for his body was found in the drawing-room that next morning,

and after events proved that he had been killed. He had no bad wounds of any kind on his person, save a light concussion or scratch on his forehead which had resulted from a fall. It would have been thought little of and the general verdict perchance would have been that he had died as a result of heart or other trouble, but for the fact that the strong box door was wide open, while papers of every kind were scattered over the floor. I had my suspicions from the first that everything was not right. At the investigation of the Chief Magistrate it was disclosed by testimony of several of the servants that Barrymore had visited the lord that very night, as was wont to be his custom, and had not at a late hour taken his leave. Upon inquiry, nothing of Barrymore whatsoever could be learned and suspicion at once fell on him. We all of us think him the murderer," at which statement all the habitués of the place nodded their heads in assent. "But it seems strange he has never been found." Here again he settled back in his chair and drained his bowl while he again whiffed at his pipe, and Murdock, believing him finished in his narrative, ventured to say :

"A strange story, and——"

"I'm not half done my tale as yet," interrupted the stout man, who was now ready to proceed. "I had said that we believed Barrymore the murderer ;

well, so did every one in the village. The thing died out in a short space. Lord Desbrow's child, a girl, was kept at the nursery and was doing nicely. The town folks all took a mighty interest in the tot, and we were one day greatly startled when we were told she had mysteriously disappeared. The facts were these: As she was nigh to four years, she was allowed to romp on the green in front of the nursery, and on one occasion, when the nurse had left her for a moment, she was either stolen or she ran away, for on the nurse's reappearance nothing of the child could be seen. I for one believe she was stolen, but by whom? Who could have found anything of value in a mere child? She was not kept for ransom for we never heard of her again."

As he completed, he drank the remainder of his punch, and was becoming more and more hilarious as the strong liquor went to his head.

Murdock had listened attentively and now asked,

"Was there any such man as Langford connected with the affair, in any manner?"

"Langford—Langford! Why, yes—the very name. But how came you by it? Have you heard the tale afore this?" asked the stout man as he wrinkled his brow and stared at Murdock.

"Merely through the newspapers. I believe I

64 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

read something of it not long ago. The story is sometimes revived by the sensational journals."

"Ah, 'tis such a strange affair. But if I remember aright, your question was whether one Langford had a hand in the affair. I answer you yes, he was in the business, but merely as a witness, and he was the one that gave the officials the first idea that Barrymore was the guilty party. Ah! Langford was indeed a rare fellow. What say you, John?"

"That he surely was, for more than once he visited the tavern here, and was always a good chap with the shillings," answered the tavern-keeper, who evidently judged the merits of people by how much they expended at his grog shop.

"But Langford's this long time dead, poor fellow, I guess on to a score of years now. He did come here for a time after he left the village and always had plenty of money. Ah, he made a great man of himself, did Langford, for he often told me of his large farm in South Wales," murmured our stout friend, more to himself than to the gathering.

"It is indeed a strange story, and I thank you greatly for your night's entertainment. Here!" exclaimed Murdock, turning to the host, "one more bowl of punch and then I'm off to bed, for it's getting rather late."

The assemblage having finished this last bowl, Murdock bid them good night and then followed the tavern-keeper up the narrow staircase to the floor above, where he was shown to a neat little low-roofed room in which he was to sleep for the night. He entered and, bolting the door, listened to the receding sound of the footsteps of the host as he descended the stairs, then, with something of a triumphant smile as he extinguished the candle, he said :

“My journey here has not been entirely in vain, after all.”

For a time the assemblage below continued in their boisterous jesting, and loud peals of laughter often reached the ears of Murdock. In a short space the villagers departed one by one, and soon the inn was wrapped in silence.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNWELCOME MISSIVE.

A MONTH has passed since the night of the scene in Paul de Fere's drawing-room with Langford. The constant thought of that night's adventure has played sad havoc with Paul's features, and they plainly show the effects of his extreme nervous condition. He has by no means forgotten the events of that night, but has regained some of his lost confidence in the fact that a month has passed and the police have not yet, nor probably ever will, find the murderer of Langford. At first he repented, but as the days wore on and he saw that the chances of his detection grew smaller, he was somewhat glad he had rid himself of his deadly foe. He need not worry or fear that any one would tell his secret to the authorities, for the only man who knew it was now out of harm's way. For a week he did not attend to his duties as president of the bank, but he was now as regular in his habits as before. This day he walked to the banking institution, a distance of nearly two miles, as it diverted his mind from the awful thoughts which would prevail was he to

drive there in his coupé. An hour later and he stood before the building which bore his name. It was a massive structure of brown stone, five stories in height. The main or street floor was occupied by the bank, while the floors above were rented out to lawyers, brokers and the like for offices. It was nearly eighteen years since he had organized this banking institution. As a man with untold wealth, he was readily chosen as the president, and was as such, honored, admitted and received in the best of society.

The bank prospering for a time, large dividends were paid annually to the stockholders, but of late a great decrease in the profits was noticed. There were fewer depositors than formerly and the bank could not make any large loans. It was whispered in all commercial circles that the bank was in a bad way. But though it was now a losing concern, the stockholders pluckily continued to put their hands in their pockets to refill the fast diminishing treasury. Thus it was that the failure which was awaited by many was staved off from time to time.

Paul entered the bank and issued into his private apartment. It was noticed by the clerks that he had arrived earlier this morning than was his custom. He had removed his outer coat and was raising his folding desk, when Victor, who was

68 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

cashier of the institution, entered and handed him the mail. Victor had not as yet told Paul of his love for Rosabel, and was nearly on the point of telling him then and there, when he thought that it would be wiser to wait until evening and ask Paul at his residence, where the latter's mind would be somewhat freer from business thoughts, and where he would be able to reason with him.

"Good morning, Victor," exclaimed Paul, as Victor entered. "Any news from the Bank of Berlin? Have they suspended?"

"No, sir. The *Bank Journal* says in this morning's edition that they have secured a loan from some mysterious source, and are now on a better footing than ever," answered Victor.

"Ah, that's well, for a failure of that bank would rock every institution in the country.—Yes, that's good. By the way, has Monsieur Beaure been here this morning?"

"No, sir. Not as yet."

"Has Monsieur Le Carte?"

"Yes, he called 'most a half hour ago, but could not wait. He left this note."

"That will probably explain everything. What of Champon?"

"He has not called since Tuesday."

"That's strange. We had better recall that loan

An Unwelcome Missive. 69

of his. I believe the fellow's not sincere in his doings—yes, write him and tell him we will recall the loan. Let me see, is there anything else I wanted to ask you? Let me see. Oh, yes, does Beauregard still deposit here? I heard him say at the club last night that he would withdraw all his funds."

"He still deposits here, and only this morning left 5000 francs for deposit as soon as the bank opens."

"Ah, he is indeed an inconsistent man. But to your place, 'tis nine, and time to open the bank."

"I will go, sir." So saying, Victor made his exit and entered his compartment. Opening the small sliding window, he began paying out or receiving money, as the case might be, as the line of people drew up in their regular order to the window.

Left to himself, Paul read his mail. There were bills, business communications, and invitations to various social events. He took little time in reading any of these, for his mind was far from scenes of gaiety. Having completed his perusal, he sat with his head bowed down, pondering over the follies of his past. Then suddenly his face assumed a cruel aspect, and he muttered :

"The crash will surely come. Only one thing

can prevent it. Oh, why was I fool enough to pay the scoundrel such exorbitant prices for his silence! Had I killed him at first, all this agony and remorse would not have been brought upon me. No, not on me, for I have little honor left, but on Rosabel. What care I for myself? It is she I must shield, and she alone that I must protect from this scandal. A pistol shot would suffice for my escape from the inevitable discovery, but no, no, I must live to shelter her from all the shame and—but I must act quickly, for this muttering will not save either she or I. Thank heavens, there will be no examination of the books for some weeks, at least. During that time I may be able to make satisfactory arrangements. Oh, God, why did this blood-money ever enter my hands? Why was I not contented as I was? At least I could sleep nights then, and had something of a clear conscience. Alas! I have neither of these now, and am threatened with being a beggar. I am a wrecked man—but no, I——”

Here a knock on the door aroused him.

“Come in,” he exclaimed.

A messenger boy entered and handed him a telegram. He turned ghastly white, and dismissed the boy.

“What’s this?—a telegram! From whom, I won-

An Unwelcome Missive. 71

der—Oh, God, no, not from the authorities—I dread to open it— But no, why should they send me telegrams?—No, they would arrest me without giving me notice— No, it cannot be from them—I will read it.” With trembling hands he tore off the envelope and read :

“ PARIS, Dec. 10, 18—.

“ *Monsieur Paul de Fere,*

“ *Prest. De Fere Banking Inst.*

“ SIR :—

“ Having been informed from various sources that your bank is not as secure as the law provides, we have decided to make an investigation at once to ascertain the truth, instead of waiting until January, the time of our usual examination. Kindly have your books ready for inspection on the 15th.

“ J. DE BOURGETE,

“ Deputy Inspector.”

“ All is lost ! ” exclaimed he, as the yellow missive fell from his grasp, “ the vengeance of God is upon me. My doom is nearer than I had expected. Poor Rosabel—she will have to suffer much. No, she shall not—I cannot, cannot bear to have her suffer. But I must act at once—but how—how? I have

72 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

it—yes—though some one else will suffer, she will be saved. It shall be done—yes, it must be done.”

He was thus muttering to himself when he was summoned to the outer room to confer with several of the bank’s patrons on some money affair.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENGAGEMENT.

VICTOR, on the evening of the day we saw him at the bank, true to his resolve, visits Paul's house, bent on asking him for the hand of Rosabel in marriage. He is greeted in a more than cordial manner by Rosabel and they talk over the doings of the day. Victor at last tells her that to-night he will ask her father for his answer to the question which means so much to both of them, and a short time later leaves Rosabel in the library in great suspense, while he makes his way to Paul's drawing-room.

Entering the room, he notices that Paul, who has been in his usual reverie, starts perceptibly from his chair, but that on seeing who has entered, resumes his composure.

"Oh, it is you—'tis well," exclaims he in breathless tones, as he falls rather than sits in his chair. "I'm glad you came—pray be seated. Ah—but you gave me something of a start. I could not for a moment think who it could be that came in so abruptly"—then, as he noticed that Victor's face

74 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

flushed he hastened to continue, "But there, don't mind my words—all is now well and I am again quite myself."

"I beg your pardon for intruding, but I——"

"No excuses—no excuses—for you know that in my house you are as one of the family and are always welcome as if it were your home," interrupted Paul.

"Thanks, Monsieur, I appreciate your great kindness and confidence in me," then after a pause Victor continued: "Monsieur de Fere, I have come here to-night to talk on a subject which means much to you and I—a subject which I may say means my life."

What could it be, what did he mean, wondered Paul. Surely he could not have learned anything—No, no, it was impossible. Then aloud he said:

"Proceed, Victor, you have my closest attention."

"Well, to continue. You have been more than kind to me these many years, and, in fact, your kindness has been the means of making of me all that I am. You took me as an orphan, reared me, gave me an honored position, educated me and have treated me, I might say, as a son. I thank you and have thanked you many times for these great things which I can never, try as I might, repay. Perhaps you will think it cruel and a show-

ing of little gratitude in me, when I ask of you something which is, I know, dearer to you than your life." Paul de Fere had now gleaned the truth, but did not interrupt Victor, for he admired the young man's honest talk, and decided to hear all he had to say. "Monsieur de Fere, I have loved your daughter Rosabel—there, don't start, I know that I am talking of the most precious thing of your life, but pray hear me out, then, if you think unfavorably of me and my words, I will abide by your answer and decision. As I said, I have loved Rosabel for many years, since childhood, I might say, and perhaps I am vain when I say she returns that love. I have asked her to become my wife—and she—she has consented. Now, Monsieur, I ask you, will you, can you, give me some encouragement, something that I may hope for—some words which will make us both happy? If you cannot say 'yes' now, give me some encouragement as to the future."

Monsieur de Fere sat spellbound to the spot, thoughts quickly passing through his unsettled mind. Victor stood waiting for the answer that would decide his fate. In a deliberate way Paul at last said :

"Victor, 'tis true, I have always loved you and thought of you as I would of my own child. I

76 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

took pleasure in watching you as you grew to manhood, and now as you stand before me, having reached that step, I must say that I still love you. You must know what a sacrifice you ask of me—but yet for my own selfish self I should or ought not to refuse. I cannot give you a decided answer to-night but I can give you that which you also asked—encouragement. Wait and hope. I have thought long over the matter and have come to the conclusion that you would make Rosabel an ideal husband, but until my business cares become lighter I must ask you to wait. Ere a fortnight, perhaps, you will be man and wife; go to Rosabel and tell her there is hope.”

“I thank you, Monsieur, for those words, for they give me great hope.” Having said this both men arose, faced each other and gave each other a hearty shake of the hand. Victor then hurried below, where Rosabel was awaiting him, all excitement. On seeing the smiling face of Victor as he entered, however, she could not restrain herself, and a moment later they were in each other’s arms. Having told the conversation from beginning to end, Victor repeated time and time again the last words of Paul, “There is hope, and ere a fortnight, perhaps, you will be man and wife.”

We return to Paul.

He was indeed glad that Rosabel had chosen Victor as her husband, for he saw in him a man that would protect and keep her from all danger, but the one thought he could not eliminate from his mind was how to save himself from detection in the defalcation of the bank's funds. The announcement of the arrival of the family physician again cut short his reverie. A stout elderly gentleman entered.

"Ah, good evening, my dear friend," exclaimed he. "What's this—looking pale again—even worse than yesterday. Too much worry, Monsieur, too much worry. You'll have to be careful; indeed very careful."

"No, doctor, I am not any worse than yesterday. I'm feeling better than for some time past. In a short space I will again be quite myself."

"Tut, tut, nothing of the sort. You are not well and you are fully aware of the fact. Every day you are getting more nervous; in a short time, instead of being yourself again you will be—I dare not mention what, but you can surmise," gruffly answered the doctor, who was evidently fond of grown-some jesting.

"You mean a corpse?" asked Paul in a low, trembling voice.

"I mean just that. You should go away from this noisy city. Quietude is what you need. Go to

78 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

some more healthful region. Why not Italy?—there's just the climate. Yes, yes, Italy's the place you should go to at once."

"It's impossible—utterly impossible at this time of the year. No, I cannot go."

"Monsieur, you know I have given you the best of advice as your doctor for years—now, as your friend, I say give up your business; you have plenty of money—why not retire? If not for always, at least for a time. Surely you could take a few months' vacation. If not taken soon, I fear it will be too late."

"Well, then, as you say, doctor; a warmer climate. I will give it my earnest thought," answered Paul as the doctor arose to go.

"'Tis well; I will call again in a few days.—But don't forget—a short visit to the warm climate ere it is too late."

So saying, the doctor made his exit.

Paul sat in silence for a time after the doctor had taken his leave, thinking of all the misfortunes that had overtaken him at once, and then he muttered.

"I will have to act on the morrow. Yes, it must be done, even if my best friend suffers as the result. I am growing desperate—it must be my victory. They must never know that Paul de Fere was other than a man of honor. No, they shall never know it—I shall act on the morrow."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALL OF INNOCENCE.

AT the bank next day, quite some apprehension existed among the employees, for a meeting of the bank directors had been hastily called that morning and the session was now in order in the directors' room. Each man thought more and more that this was evidently a sign that the bank's career would soon be ended, but though they all seemed to glean the truth, not even so much as a whisper escaped to the ears of the public. For weeks mysterious happenings had been of frequent occurrence in the bank's interior, but the innocent depositors could discern nothing in the faces of the bank's employees.

It seemed strange to all that the meeting should be of such unusual length. At most times the meetings were over in from half to three quarters of an hour, but here the directors had already been closeted up for more than three hours, with no signs of an adjournment. Surely something of importance must be going on.

80 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

In the directors' room sat a dozen or more men of middle age. Each man had the keen business look that years of worry will give, and all were now possessed of grave, cast-down expressions. Paul de Fere, as President, occupied the chairman's seat and sat at the head of the long oaken table. Victor was seated at his right, and a large pile of books were lying on the center of the table.

During the meeting they had gone over all the resources and liabilities of the bank, but could not find anything that would explain why the bank was losing money when they should at least be receiving moderate dividends. Nothing could be found that was not as it should be in the keeping of the books, and it was decided that the examiners should have full sway in their examination. Although it was not mentioned outright during the progress of the meeting that some one was evidently dishonest in his dealings with the bank, the faces of the assemblage only too plainly suggested it.

The meeting adjourned until after the examination of the books by the examiners, and all promised to keep the meeting as close a secret as was possible. The directors having gone, Paul de Fere fell back in his chair. The strain of the meeting had been exhausting. He still had an hour before the arrival of the examiners. He must act at once. But

The Fall of Innocence. 81

how, thought he. The books would be examined, and if it was found that he was the culprit, which in time undoubtedly would be, he would be doomed to ultimate ruin. It now rested between Victor and he. Both possessed combinations to the safe. Naturally both would come under the ban of suspicion. Should it be discovered that Victor's books were correctly kept, he would probably be vindicated from suspicion and Paul eventually discovered.

A half hour had passed. Paul had but a short time to act. A sigh escaped his lips. Then for a moment he sat still. His face assumed a horrible aspect as dark thoughts passed through his mind. With a start he arose. He had decided what to do. He knew it to be the President's privilege to inspect any and all books in the bank when he so desired, and with that excuse as a mask he rang a small electric bell and asked the clerk who responded to his call to bring the ledger, cash and teller's books. A moment later they were in his possession. The clerk having gone, he lowered the curtains so that he could not be seen from without, and stuffed up the keyhole of the door with his handkerchief. What did all this mean? Surely no good.

From the bottom drawer of his desk he now drew forth a small bottle. Then with the aid of its con-

82 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

tents he removed several figures in the various books, writing in their stead others of larger or smaller denomination. He worked slowly and with great caution, for he was obliged to imitate the writing of the person who kept the books. In this way the amounts were changed, and at the end of ten minutes' industrious working he had the books returned to their proper places, saying as he handed them to the clerk, more for effect than otherwise :

"As far as I can see, these books are correct."

He then resumed his seat and awaited results. The work he had accomplished had made him perspire freely, and his linen was now quite starchless. A knock on the door made his face flush and he became extremely nervous. Two gentlemen entered the room and presented cards. They proved to be the bank examiners. Paul's face now turned an ashen hue, but with a great effort he controlled himself and greeted the newcomers cordially.

"It gives me great pleasure to receive such esteemed gentlemen as you, but I would much have preferred to have the meeting under more favorable circumstances."

"We appreciate your reception and hope that we will find your institution in the best of standing. Believe us it is merely a form we are required to go through. I dare say we will find, as our predeces-

sors have in the past, that everything is as it should be," answered the eldest-looking of the two.

"I hope so, gentlemen," said Paul with a forced smile, "you will find the books already awaiting your inspection. They are in the directors' room to your right as you pass out. I hope you will give them a complete and thorough examination, and I also pray that you will find everything correct."

"I am almost certain we will," answered the elderly-looking examiner as he stepped into the hall, "but we will soon be able to determine."

They passed into the next room, and as Paul heard the door slam after them he fell back in his seat, his forehead bathed in perspiration. For hours he had endured great agonies of the mind and he was now very faint.

Several hours later one of the examiners returned to Paul's chamber and asked him to quietly step into the other room, as they had found something which was of great importance. He arose, knowing full well what they had found, and commanding all his reserve strength, passed into the other room. Here he found everything in utter confusion, showing that much work had been accomplished by the examiners. Papers were scattered in all directions over the floor and the books of account were lying carelessly about.

84 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Having secured the door, the eldest of the two examiners, who he afterwards learned was the Deputy, whispered in low tones :

“You have a defaulter in your bank !”

“Good God !” exclaimed Paul, who, although he was perfectly aware of that fact, was quite startled at the manner of the examiner, who acted much as if he suspected the real truth, “impossible, impossible. It cannot be !”

“The books speak for themselves. You can see them. Ah, but what puzzles me greatly is how the directors could have gone over the books, as carefully as you say they did, without noticing so palpable a theft as this,” said the Deputy in rather sneering tones.

“What is the amount of the theft ?” asked Paul with quivering tones.

“It will reach about a million francs.”

“Heavens, what an amount ! The bank will surely be crushed.”

“Will not the directors make good the amount ?”

“No, no ; it is not the first time this has occurred. It is too much to ask of them. They have already lost much and it would be unfair ; or, rather, I fear they will refuse to lose their all in the crash.”

“A pretty mess this,” sneeringly said the Deputy.

"That it is," assented his companion, who now spoke for the first time and who appeared to be a subordinate to the Deputy Examiner.

"The employees of this institution cannot leave here until the guilty party has been found. Monsieur de Fere, you will kindly arouse yourself and so inform the men," commanded the Deputy of Paul, who sat staring vacantly into space.

Paul arose, and calling the porter told him that although the employees had already remained after the banking hours they must not leave until further notice, as the Bank was now in the hands of the examiners. This announcement caused untold excitement among all, for it had not been known what had been going on all day.

"Before we accuse any one," continued the Deputy as Paul finished giving his order to the porter, "I would ask you one question. Do you know or have you any reason for suspecting any one in the bank's employ of this robbery?"

"I know of no one. No one that I could believe guilty of this crime. I have always had full confidence in them all."

"Yes, yes, that's all very well, but confidence in them does not prove them honest by any means. I have known cases where a man considered of the greatest honesty ; admitted into society and in-

86 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

timately acquainted with nobility, was, during all the time of his supposed honesty, stealing thousands and thousands of francs intrusted to him every day." Then after a pause he continued, "Come, gather your thoughts ; surely you must have some suspicions."

"No, no ; I told you I suspected no one. It is the truth. You would not have me accuse an innocent man," murmured Paul, who saw that he was in a peculiar predicament and one in which a false move or word might betray all. He knew that could he get the examiners to make the accusation it would put him in a better light.

"It is our right to know, and we shall not suspend our inquiry or examination until the guilty party is found," said the Deputy in a determined manner.

The battle of words thus continued for some time, but nothing could be extracted from Paul that would as much as give a faint suspicion of who was guilty. The examiners then again turned their attention from Paul and examined the books. Nine o'clock struck and the bank employees had not yet been dismissed. The clerks had had plenty of time to think over their past life, and as one and the other completed his task and found that he had a clear conscience, a sigh of relief might have been heard escape his lips.

In the directors' room the struggle to have Paul accuse some one had again been resumed, but Paul could not be induced to say a word against any one. Then at last the Deputy said :

"After looking thoroughly at all the books and giving them our careful examination, since you refuse or do not know the guilty party who has been robbing your bank for at least ten years, we will endeavor to inform you who it is. Mark my words, it will not be guesswork, for we are not here to make accusations that are not the truth. Listen, he is——"

"Oh, spare me!" exclaimed Paul, who thought that he had been discovered. "Spare me this humiliation. Let it never be known that——"

"Come, come—brace up—your actions are entirely not those of a well man," exclaimed the Deputy, as he grasped Paul by the arm and slightly shook him, for Paul had assumed a position on his knees, as if imploring the deputies not to reveal the name.

"Yes, yes—I am not well," said Paul, as he recovered his reason, that had temporarily been lost to him, and said, as he saw that his actions had made the Deputy somewhat angry: "Go on, give me the scoundrel's name."

"That I cannot do. I cannot give you his name,

88 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

but I can tell you what position he holds. The man who robbed your bank is the *Cashier*."

"Oh, thank heaven," whispered Paul, as if relieved of a burden; then, seeing the folly of his words, he hastened to continue: "No—no—impossible—it cannot be. No, not Victor—not Victor."

"Nevertheless, the facts all point that way, and there is no alternative but to accuse your cashier," the Deputy here found time to say.

"I cannot believe it, but still it is nonsense to dispute proofs—if he is guilty he must suffer," said Paul, as he saw a chance of saving himself from discovery, though it was at the cost of disgracing the lover of his daughter.

"Ah, you are now willing to admit that we are right? Now pray give us the fellow's name."

"His name—is Victor—oh, I cannot," and Paul pretended to burst into tears. Then after a time he continued: "It grieves me plainly to tell you his name, but I presume duty must be done; his name—his name is—Victor Gasgoine."

"Ah, at last," exclaimed the Deputy in triumph, "you might have saved us much time had you spoken and told us at first."

"But I did not think him guilty," answered Paul, who it seemed had not taken long to recover from his sorrow.

"It is now the proper course to inform this Victor Gasgoine that he has been caught. You had better call him."

"No—no—spare me this—spare me this," cried Paul piteously, not desiring to meet Victor face to face as his accuser.

"You act strangely enough—perhaps you are trying to shield this young culprit," retorted the Deputy.

Paul at any other time would have resented this insult with a blow, but it only showed him that unless he acted without hesitation, he, too, might be suspected.

"How dare you say that? As government examiners, you have many rights and privileges, but you have no power to command or be insulting in your language," hotly retorted Paul, and then continued: "Summon Victor Gasgoine, I will speak to him."

Victor, who was sitting at his desk reading the evening papers, and wondering at the length of time the examiners were going to remain, was a little surprised when summoned by Paul to come to the directors' room, but thinking that perhaps there was some question which they likely wanted to ask him, he readily arose and hurried to the room.

Entering, he was somewhat taken back at his

cool reception, and was further surprised when the Deputy examiner exclaimed in a loud authoritative voice :

“Victor Gasgoine, you have been caught. Your crime has found you out. You did your work well, but have run your last race.”

“Sir, what do you mean? How dare you speak thus to me?” answered Victor, whose face flushed a crimson red at the first words of the Deputy. At first he was surprised and then shocked as the Deputy continued in his gruff accusation.

“Bravo—good—excellent. By Jove, you have missed your vocation. You should be acting on the stage. The scene you just enacted is as good as Coquelin himself could have performed it,” continued the Deputy, staring at Victor who he thought was really guilty.

“Oh, stop this nonsense, and tell me what I’ve been brought here for. What does this all mean?” Then to Paul he said, “Monsieur de Fere, surely you will tell me.”

“It means,” interrupted the Deputy, “that you are accused of abstracting the bank’s funds for your own use. That’s what it means.”

“It’s a lie—a base, infamous lie, and I dare you repeat it,” cried Victor, in so loud a voice that it might have been heard throughout the building.

Then, as he observed a lurking smile on the Deputy's countenance, as if doubting his words, he sprang at him, but the combined efforts of Paul and the younger examiner were too great, and he soon subsided in his struggles.

"And you are the man I believed and trusted," now Paul ventured to say for display, "the man who asked me for my daughter's hand and who nearly received my assent. Coward—how could you ask this, knowing yourself to be the scoundrel you are?"

"Stop, stop—no more of this—I protest against it. Were I released I dare say you would all cower at my feet. Cowards, release me and I will make you retract those words. As for you, Monsieur de Fere, I pity Rosabel that such a man should be her father. But for her I swear I would make you take back your words."

"Do not again repeat her name. You have relinquished all right to that. All is over between you. Oh, to think that my daughter narrowly escaped marrying a thief—a defaulter!" exclaimed Paul, who saw that by talking thus he would gain the good-will of the examiners.

Victor turned white with rage as those harsh words reached his ears, but recovering his self-possession, he exclaimed in a calm voice :

"Those are cruel words, Monsieur, but some day you may have reason to recall them. You have been more than kind to me in the past, and for that reason I will forget."

"Shall we ring for the Prefect, Monsieur?" asked the Deputy.

"No, no, 'tis useless, for the bank would be crowded with people to-morrow desiring to withdraw their money and we would not be able to meet their demands. It would be our ruination. No, no, it would be useless. Besides, my daughter's name must not be brought into this scandal. No—no, I will not prosecute him. I will explain all to the directors, then if they decide to press the matter he can easily be brought up and confronted with the charge. 'Twould do little good, for the scoundrel has nothing and not a franc of the money can ever be recovered from him. I will stand the censure of the directors, should they take offense at my method of dealing with him." Here Monsieur de Fere pressed something into the hand of the deputy examiner.

"I desire none of your kindness, Monsieur de Fere. I prefer an examination before a court of justice, for from it I know I will find justice and am positive that I can prove my innocence," said Victor.

This fact no one knew better than Paul, and it was also his reason for not having Victor arrested. He knew an investigation by the police would be hazardous to his own welfare.

"Ha! ha! a merry jest," laughed the examiners, who appeared well satisfied with their day's work.

"Out with you, and never show your face inside this institution again, and by all means never talk or communicate with my daughter Rosabel again, or you will probably regret it," exclaimed Paul to Victor.

"Very well," replied the latter, who had now recovered his composure. "Never fear, I will never enter your bank again, but as to seeing your daughter, if she so desires we will see each other as of yore. I would also advise you, before I take leave, that I will not rest until I have solved this mystery to the bottom, and should I find the man who has been the means of wrecking my life, God have mercy on him, for I won't."

"Clear the place, gentlemen," quickly returned Paul, who greatly feared Victor as he now appeared. As Victor passed into the outer room, the eyes of all his associates were turned on him and he keenly felt his position. A short time later the bank was closed up for the night.

Midnight, while making his rounds, the watchman

94 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

heard a sound in the president's room. Entering and flashing his lantern around the room, he observed the President, Paul de Fere, with head resting on his desk, sobbing piteously. He aroused him, and as he beheld him staggering through the side door of the bank into the street, he nodded his head, wondering what it all could mean.

CHAPTER X.

AN OBSTACLE TO OVERCOME.

NEXT morning Rosabel, seated in the drawing-room, awaited her father's appearance. After a tedious wait of perhaps half an hour, she began to fear that something was wrong and she decided to learn, if possible, what it was. Hastily going upstairs, she stopped before the door of her father's room. The door was closed but there was nothing strange in this. She knocked lightly on the panel and received no reply. Again she knocked and still she received no reply. What could be the cause of all this? Surely had her father been in the room he would have heard her knocking, for he was anything but a heavy sleeper. She repeated her knocking. As before her efforts were useless. She began to be alarmed.

"Father, father!" she now cried, but there was no answer.

She continued her knocking on the door with more vigor, then as she received no answer, she ventured to turn the knob. She had not expected to find the door unlocked, but such was the case,

96 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

She could no longer restrain her curiosity, and slightly pushing the door open looked within. The room was empty. Her father's bed was undisturbed. He had not slept in it the night before.

What could have happened? Had he remained at the club for the night? If so, it was the first time she could recollect that this had occurred. Had he been injured while returning home or had he been struck down or waylaid by some ruffian? These and many other thoughts flashed through her mind.

She hurried below, intent on making inquiries of the servants. As she passed through the hall, she thought of looking into the drawing-room, though she little expected to find her father there. She drew aside the Japanese curtains, and fancy her great joy at beholding him fast asleep in the huge armchair. She now noticed that he still wore his outer coat, and that his hat and cane were lying on the floor near his seat. His face had a careworn expression and, as he now appeared, he made quite a sorrowful spectacle. She advanced, her face wreathed in smiles, and placing her arms around his neck, was surprised when he started from his chair, exclaiming :

"Not I; 'tis false! I never did it. Yes, yes, he is the guilty one;" then, as Paul observed Rosabel

standing before him and remembered where he was, he looked somewhat abashed.

"What is the trouble, father?" asked Rosabel, knowing at once that he had been interrupted in some strange train of thought.

"'Tis nothing, nothing, my child. I have had little sleep. That will account for my actions. But I'm quite myself now. The work at the bank, has unstrung my nerves. However, it is nothing. I will soon be myself again," said Paul, trying to cover up anything he might have said when first aroused.

"Ah, father, you do not tell me all. You have secrets. I know it is your right, but perhaps were you to confide in me, I might help you."

"I have no secrets from you, Rosabel. But, as I said, the bank's troubles prey heavily on my mind. I was at the bank most of last night. There was a special meeting and an unusually long session."

Paul acted and talked almost incoherently, and kept his head bowed down continually. Rosabel wondered what was the cause of the great change in his actions.

"Breakfast is ready, father; perhaps a cup of tea will do you good. Come, let us go below," returned Rosabel.

"No, no, I care for nothing ; you go, I will remain here. I must have quietude. I must be alone."

"Oh, father, what is the trouble ? Do tell me—for as you now act and talk you seem so strange to me. You are hardly yourself this morning. Why don't you give up the horrid banking business if it is the cause of all your worry ? Besides, father, you know the doctor advised you to take a rest."

"No, no, I need no rest. It's not the bank that is causing me this worry. Far from it. Ah, but you will learn all in time. You will learn all in time. Then, perhaps, you will think differently of me."

Rosabel could not understand it all. He seemed to be muttering sentences of which he himself did not know the meaning.

"You act very strangely, indeed. I can't understand it ; but there, there, if it's so great a secret, I would prefer not to hear anything of it," answered Rosabel, wishing to change the topic of conversation.

"That's well, we will pass the matter from our minds. It is for the best."

For a time Paul sat staring at the floor, while Rosabel stood behind his chair wondering what had come over her father.

Suddenly he said, in a loud voice, as if the thought had suddenly struck him :

An Obstacle to Overcome. 99

"Rosabel, the opening night of the Opera takes place to-morrow. Have you made arrangements to go?"

"Yes, I had thought of going. But since you are ill, father, why I will remain at home."

"I'm not ill. No, no, I'm not ill, and I wish you would not refer to my being ill again," fairly shouted Paul. Then in milder tones: "No, Rosabel, you should not remain home on my account, for I had also thought of going."

"Well, then, Victor can accompany us, can't he, father? We can make it a party of three."

"Who did you say? Victor? Victor Gasgoine?" asked Paul, as he again started from his seat. "No, you shall not go with him nor he with us."

"Why, father, why not allow Victor to accompany us? Is he not to be my——"

"Nay, not your husband. Not your husband. For I know full well that you would not care to marry a thief," retorted Paul in cruel tones, scarcely knowing how or to whom he spoke.

A loud cry escaped Rosabel's lips and she sank to the floor. Paul, having recovered his reason, now saw the folly of his words and regretted his hasty words. In a moment he had placed her gently in a chair, and with the aid of smelling salts she soon revived.

"Oh, father, what do you say?" were her first words. "Surely you do not mean to call Victor by that horrible name?"

"It pains me greatly to think so, but you must know the whole story to understand and believe as I do." Paul with some difficulty then briefly related the events of the preceding night, being often interrupted in his narrative by the sobs of Rosabel.

"It is not true. Victor would not, could not do it?" exclaimed Rosabel, as Paul completed telling her the story. Then suddenly she burst into another flow of tears.

"But when you think of the great proofs that exist, it is almost nonsensical to think otherwise but that he is guilty. Think of the examiners; their examination; the finding of the deficiency in his accounts, amounting to almost a million francs; then what else can one believe?" asked Paul, who was trying his utmost to convince Rosabel that Victor was really guilty.

"I would still believe him innocent. All the proofs in the world would not shatter my belief, for I know him incapable of such an act." She again burst into tears on completion of this bold declaration, for she was almost heart-broken. It was the first time that she and her father had had harsh words together.

An Obstacle to Overcome. 101

Paul was nonplussed at her view of the matter and tried to comfort her.

"There, there, we will give the matter no further, thought."

"But, father, tell me you believe Victor innocent. I know you do in your own heart."

"Rosabel," said he, "the proofs speak for themselves. Everything points to him. I would be the first to believe him innocent was there the smallest chance for doubt. It would be folly on my part to say he is innocent. But I will say, if the smallest chance presents itself, showing Victor to be innocent, I will be the first to take his hand. What more could I do?"

"You act more like yourself now. Those words give me hope. I know now that you will do your utmost to prove him innocent."

"I will promise to do all I can in that respect. I have the greatest regard for him, and only hope that he will eventually be able to extricate himself from this serious position."

"Thank you, father, for those words, and I am sure that if Victor was here he would also appreciate your great interest in him," said Rosabel, in tones that rang with sincerity.

Rosabel made her way to the dining-hall below and Paul remained in the drawing-room.

102 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

He had encountered his first real obstacle in his accusation of Victor. One not easily thrust aside, to be sure, but he prided himself on having made better progress than he had anticipated, and believed the rest of his work to be plain sailing.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNDELIVERED LETTER.

PAUL had planned carefully, and on the next morning after the events at the bank, little if anything appeared in the papers of the theft, and the later dismissal of Victor. Paul had plotted thus, for he felt certain that should accounts reach the newspapers, long articles would no doubt be written up, which would be the means of arousing the police. The latter would no doubt be tempted to make an investigation, which, with the aid of the best detectives of Paris, could end in nothing short of his discovery.

The evening papers contained longer accounts, but as they could gain no information from the bank's employees, they also had very few of the facts. Still enough appeared to result in the ruin of Victor.

After passing through the portals of the bank that eventful night Victor issued forth into the dark street with a wrecked life. He determined, however, to sift the matter to the bottom, and, if, possible prove to the eyes of the world that he was innocent.

The next morning he was out early as usual, but instead of going to his duties at the bank he walked listlessly in the direction of his club. He entered and sauntered into the salon, and here met several of his friends who were so wealthy that they had little or nothing else to do than visit the various organizations they belonged to and thus spend the day. He advanced towards the group that was standing near the entrance to the billard-room, and extending his hand, said :

“ Good morning, gentlemen, how——”

He did not finish, for they turned their backs toward him as he spoke. A knife could not have cut him deeper. He felt as if he could have thrown himself amongst them and made them apologize on their knees for the insult. He controlled himself, however, and acting the part of a gentleman, walked quietly from the room. Here indeed he was somewhat taken aback, for he had not expected any such reception at the hands of his club mates. Being of a haughty disposition, he decided to absent himself, from his former places of amusement until he had proven conclusively that he was innocent. He still had one hope—Rosabel. Would she still believe in him? Would their engagement still exist? He had great hopes. He would at the first chance see her. Then if he was mistaken, life

would be of little value to him and he would surrender the unequal struggle.

The days passed more quickly than he had anticipated. But he had made no progress in his fight to prove himself innocent. Night after night he had stood in the shadow of the trees opposite the garden and residence of Monsieur Paul de Fere, waiting for one glimpse of Rosabel.

His thoughts were sorrowful as he thought of the time, not so long ago, when he was admitted and accepted as one of the family in the mansion before which he now stood. Each night disappointment had been his reward. Not once had he seen her, and it is small wonder, when one knows the precaution that Paul had taken to keep Rosabel and Victor from meeting. A man in his employ had stood nightly in the garden, watching and reporting the visits and movements of Victor.

Victor had on several occasions noticed this man in the darkness, and had often wondered what his business could have been.

This night, as he stood waiting fruitlessly as usual, he again observed the man in the shadow of the trees. Crossing the street, he beckoned to the latter, and he readily walked up and presented himself. A man of immense size and muscular development, veritably a Hercules in form, stands

106 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

before Victor. But his excellent physique is off-set and dimmed by the dark scowl upon his face. The stranger stood still and stared at Victor with a look as of amazement. Victor ended the tableau by asking :

“Are you employed on Monsieur de Fere’s grounds?”

“That I am,” gruffly replied the stranger, who apparently was of English birth.

“In what capacity, may I venture to ask. As gardener?”

“Naw; sometimes, but most alwus in the conservatory, tendin’ the missus’ flowers.”

A thrill passed through Victor’s body and he exclaimed breathlessly :

“Do you mean to say that you see the Monsieur’s daughter Rosabel?”

“Most to every day.”

“This might be my chance,” thought Victor; “for a small sum this fellow could probably be bought to deliver a letter to Rosabel. This is certainly good luck. The fellow may not be honest. At all events the risk will be worth the trying.”

Then aloud he asked :

“Would you mind doing me a favor; I mean one for which you are well paid?”

“Well, that depends on the job.”

An Undelivered Letter. 107

"Here you miscomprehend. I mean were I to pay you well would you deliver a letter to Mademoiselle Rosabel?"

"It's a big risk, boss. What if I should get caught?"

"You will not be caught, for Rosabel, I mean Mademoiselle Rosabel, is my friend and will only think well of you for delivering a message from me."

"Well that's a likely tale. Sure and I guess she isn't mashed on the likes of you."

Victor could have thrashed the fellow for his impudence, but he thought he saw too good a chance of having a message delivered to Rosabel to cast it aside, and only said :

"Will you do me the favor?" at the same time pressing two five-franc pieces into the fellow's hand.

"Yes, it's a go," was the answer.

"Very well. I will return in a few moments with the note I desire you to deliver. Then when you bring me her answer you shall be paid doubly what I have already paid you." A moment later Victor was gone. The gardener now straightened up and laughed heartily, saying as he did so :

"Love does make such fools of men."

A few moments later Victor, all excitement, returned. He had procured writing material at a

108 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

neighboring store and written a short note telling Rosabel that he desired to see her and asking her to name the place of meeting. Having enclosed the same in an envelope he gave it to the stranger, saying :

“ You are a rare fellow. I shall not forget your kindness and will try some time to repay you for your trouble.” The strange gardener was now gone, and after a few moments’ loitering, Victor also started on his way home.

.

After having left Victor, the gardener hurried into the mansion and walked directly through the main hall. He stopped before Monsieur de Fere’s drawing-room and knocked.

“ Come in,” reechoed from within.

The supposed gardener entered. Monsieur de Fere, who was sitting at the desk at which we have seen him before, now arose.

“ Anything new ? ” he asked.

“ Quite something, Monsieur,” answered the gardener in quite a different tone of voice and manner from that which he had used toward Victor.

“ Ah, and what pray now ? ” eagerly asked Paul.

“ Simply that the young man wrote this letter and attempted to bribe me to deliver the same to

your daughter," answered the supposed gardener, who appeared proud of his achievement.

"Ah, the poor fellow," murmured Paul as he took the letter Victor had written in his hand. "I sometimes feel quite sorry for him, for he was indeed and still is a noble fellow. Oh, but that I had the clear conscience he possesses. But come, come, Paul de Fere, you are losing your old-time nerve and courage. You must not fall now. It is far too late to turn back. The journey must be seen to its end."

Then aloud he said :

"A letter, eh ! Quite a pretty trick, Victor Gasgoine, but you are still nothing but a boy, and your schemes are those of a child. I am too old a hand at this business to be taken in by a mere novice. Your letter was delivered, but not to the person to whom you addressed it." Then, as he finished saying this, he tore the unopened letter in several pieces and cast them into the waste-basket.

"You have done well to-night, but to your place ; who knows but the fellow is still at his post below ?" said Paul to the gardener.

The latter hurriedly passed from the room, and Paul, staring into space, mused to himself :

"Poor Victor, poor Victor ! Oh, that I had the clean conscience that you to-night possess ! Oh,

110 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

that I could sleep without the terrible thoughts
which always possess me! 'Tis true the innocent
must suffer in this world, but such as myself will
suffer in the next."

CHAPTER XII.

"ONE WHO KNOWS."

DAYS have passed since Victor was discharged from the De Fere banking institution. The bank is still in operation as of old. Victor's place has been refilled by another, and the bank is thought to be sounder than ever by the general public.

Paul is at his desk, as usual, every morning. He has taken on a more healthful appearance and his mind is less troubled with the thoughts of his crime than for some time past.

This day his mail is unusually large. He reads letter after letter, lingering over some, laughing at some, and at others frowning. Here are letters of business, advertisement, and invitations to places of amusement.

He is about to cast one letter into the basket unopened, believing it to be an advertisement, when his eyes become attracted by the word "personal," which is written in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope. He becomes somewhat curious and opens it. It reads thus :

112 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

“ PARIS, Dec. 18th, 186—.

“ *Monsieur Paul de Fere* :

“ DEAR SIR :—

“ I would beg leave to speak to you at some rendezvous. Say Pierre’s Resort. I have several things which are of importance both to you and I. They concern you greatly. Perhaps you will not think it worth your while to notice this anonymous letter, as you will probably call it, but I assure you it will be at your peril and risk should you neglect to be at the appointed place.

“ The secret, or rather the several things of importance of which I would speak, are in regard to an affair near London. You should, if your memory is acute, easily discern the rest. You will remember that you are somewhat closely connected therewith. I am an old acquaintance of your esteemed deceased friend, Monsieur Langford. This should be sufficient introduction, and should also make you understand that I possess damaging knowledge of your past life.

“ It would be best to talk over this matter in private, and to that end I suggest a meeting at Pierre’s Resort. You should know where that is. An appropriate time, I think, would be at 9 P. M., sharp. Perhaps you will not know me, therefore I will describe my appearance. I am an old gentleman,

"One Who Knows." 113

with gray hair and beard. I will wear a skull-cap, frock cloak, and will carry a cane. You should have no difficulty in recognizing me. Remember 9 o'clock at Pierre's Resort.

"ONE WHO KNOWS."

Paul sat back in his seat after completing the reading of this letter and laughed heartily. But it was more of a forced laugh, for a few moments later he assumed a look of sadness and continued to read the letter over and over again. His look now became a serious one.

"I will not attend this meeting," he at last said. "'Tis the trick of some scoundrel who no doubt desires to obtain money from me. He is badly mistaken in his man, however, for I will pay no attention to it."

Again he read the missive.

"I wonder what he means when he refers to an affair near London," murmured Paul as he stared at the letter. "He makes mention of Langford. Can it be that the latter had told his secret to this man? No, no, I cannot credit him with it. It was not like Langford to risk his own head so carelessly. Yet it seems strange this man should write me this. I will pay no attention to it, however, for he cannot know anything. Nevertheless, I am

114 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

slightly wrought up over this matter. I will hardly be able to sleep to-night unless I am certain this fellow knows nothing. It would do little harm to inform the police and have the fellow caught in his own trap. Ah, but that would hardly do. What if he should really know something? In the toils he would willingly tell all to save himself from confinement. Then, if the fellow really knew of the Langford affair, it would go hard with me. I dread to think of the consequences of the latter case. Surely it will do no harm to meet this fellow, hear what he has to say, and then hand him over to the authorities should he know nothing. Yes, that method will probably give the best results."

All day he could think of nothing but of this strange letter. Many times he had resolved to let the matter drop, and just as many times did he determine to learn what the fellow really knew. After dinner, he armed himself with a revolver and clothed himself in a long black cloak and soft hat. He must have resolved after all to attend the meeting, for after issuing forth into the street he wended his way toward Pierre's Resort.

.

Victor, who stood in his accustomed place opposite the mansion, saw Paul hurrying from the house on the way to his strange meeting, and wondered

what could have been the means of bringing him out in such strange dress at such a time of night. He thought for a moment of following, but later thought better of his resolve and kept on, in his watching.

Suddenly he saw the stranger or gardener to whom he had given the note to deliver to Rosabel four days ago, lurking in the shadow of the trees in the garden of Monsieur de Fere's house. He crossed the street unobserved and suddenly confronted the man who was greatly startled by Victor's sudden appearance.

"Ah, my good fellow. Did you deliver my letter the other evening?"

The fellow could hardly command his tongue, but drawled out in breathless tones :

"Yes, Monsieur—yes. It was properly delivered."

"Then come. Give me her answer," demanded Victor.

"There is none, Monsieur."

"No answer you say? Come, she must have said something?"

"Not a word, Monsieur, not a word except—except——"

"Except what?" asked Victor; "except what? Come, speak out."

"Except that she did not know you and that you were very presumptuous in writing her and——"

He did not finish, for Victor was upon him in a moment, and although the fellow was the equal of Victor in size, he was outmatched in physical strength and was easily forced to the ground.

"'Tis false, you low, deceiving cur. The letter was never delivered to Rosabel. Tell me to whom did you deliver the letter?"

The fellow who was now lying prone upon his back with Victor above him began to lessen his struggles.

"Speak up. To whom did you deliver my letter?" demanded Victor, accompanying his words with several well-delivered blows on the fellow's body.

"For God's sake stop," shrieked the fellow, "I gave it to Mademoiselle."

A few more vigorous blows made him beg for mercy.

"Oh, God, release your hold on—my—my throat. I will speak—I will tell all."

"Then tell all—but you will not be released until I know the truth. Now speak. To whom did you give the letter?" again demanded Victor, and he increased his hold on the fellow's throat.

"To—to Monsieur de Fere," answered the stranger feebly.

"I thought as much," calmly replied Victor as he released and dismissed the wriggling coward, who lay on the grass.

Victor stood still as if in a dream, for he was greatly nonplused.

"I thought as much—I thought as much—Oh, Rosabel, I had once thought your father the best of men—I now, with due regard to you, think him one of the lowest of scoundrels," murmured he to himself.

He turned in the direction of his home and proceeded slowly thither with a heavy heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

PIERRE'S RESORT.

PAUL had often read in the newspapers of Pierre's Resort, for the place was continually the scene of much boisterous and riotous living. He had never before had the pleasure of visiting the strange resort but it must be known that he did not much enjoy his going there this night. Having taken the precaution of ascertaining the correct way of reaching the place, it did not take him long to get there.

He halted as he beheld the filthy spectacle before him, and debated long upon entering, for the exterior of the place had a most grewsome aspect. He resolved however, that having gone so far, he would go farther and see the thing through. He accordingly walked down the badly broken staircase. As he opened the door to enter, a hearty peal of laughter disturbed the nightly air. He shuddered as he beheld the interior, a dark dirty room of immense proportions, filled with the smoke of the cheapest tobacco and inhabited by the scum of the earth. Knowing it to be the rendezvous of thieves and cut-throats, he had expected to find a place not

of the neatest in appearance, but the scene before him was more horrible than he had anticipated. He thought for a moment that probably this was some trap. Perhaps he was to be murdered or held for ransom. But as he felt the cold steel of the revolver, with which he had taken the precaution to provide himself, within his pocket, he was somewhat reassured, and with a stouter heart entered. The floor was covered with sawdust, and after his eyes had become accustomed to the smoky haze, he observed that tables were placed here and there in the room, while at the back of the room were closed compartments in which were also tables and chairs. A long bar, over which the disgusting liquor was passed to the more disgusting buyers, extended the length of the room. He now saw an unoccupied table to his left, and hastened to avail himself of the opportunity of obtaining a seat, where he could command a view of the entrance. He had less than a quarter of an hour to wait until the appointed time, and yet, short as the time was, it seemed years that he was in the place. Scoundrel that Paul was, this scene he was now witnessing made him shudder.

The minutes seemed hours to him, and he was more than sorry he had taken the great risk for a comparative nothing. What was that? A doleful

tolling of an old-fashioned clock, which he now observed for the first time, in the corner of the room, told him that the appointed time had arrived. Paul smiles as the tolling continues, for he is now almost certain that the letter was nothing but a hoax. As the clock strikes nine he is about to laugh outright at his folly in coming to such a place as this, when suddenly the door opens and he beholds "the man who knows." Yes, it is he. The bent form, the white beard and hair, the skull cap, the frock cloak, and the staff all tell him too plainly that this is the man with whom he was to have the meeting.

The old man totters to the table at which Paul is sitting and stops. Staring Paul in the face for some seconds, he says, in a deep bass voice, the one word—

"Come!"

Paul, hardly knowing why, follows the old gentleman in a mechanical way, and the latter leads him to one of the closed compartments which he had noticed earlier in the evening. The old man enters and Paul follows him. Calling for a bottle of wine, which is instantly brought him, the old man secures the door from within and turns up the lamp which had been turned low when they entered.

Paul watches the movements of the old man, and as he does so he thinks that he could easily over-

power the weazened form before him, but he dreads to add another crime to his already long list. He, therefore, sits in silence.

The old man opens the bottle, and with a shaking hand pours its contents into two glasses, then, handing one to Paul, he says in a low voice :

"Let us drink before coming to business, Monsieur."

He drains his glass, but though Paul's throat is parched he can drink very little of the wine. He does nothing but stare at the old man, who, after having comfortably seated himself, whispers :

"You received my note, I know, or else you would not be here to night. However, 'tis well you came, for I had determined to tell all to the authorities did you neglect to keep this most important appointment."

Paul, with a forced laugh, said :

"That's good—very good. But pray of what all do you speak? Your letter did not interest me any more than to make me come here to see something of the lower life. To see the odd personage who had the audacity to sign himself with the insane nom de plume of 'One Who Knows.'"

"Well, you have probably seen all you came to see, and you will hear much you had not expected to hear. Listen"—and the old man's voice became

even lower than before—"I know all of the Desbrow affair."

Had he expected to see any sudden start or move on the part of Paul, he was greatly mistaken, for the latter had been prepared for just such a sudden declaration and appeared quite unconcerned.

"And pray, of what do you speak?" he asked.

"You play your part well. I speak of the mysterious death of Lord Desbrow," answered the old man as he stared into Paul's face, watching the effect of his words.

"And how in the world does this concern me?" asked Paul.

"It concerns you greatly. Do you desire to hear my tale?"

"Oh, why should I listen to this idiotic talk—this is all nothing to me!" Paul exclaimed impatiently.

"Very well," slowly answered the old man, unlocking the door as he spoke, "you are at liberty to go; but understand that by to-morrow the story will appear in all the newspapers and the police will also be in possession of some facts. Ah, you will remain?" this latter ejaculation as Paul again seated himself.

The door having again been secured, the old man continued :

"The time is nearly twenty years ago. The place

near London. The scene a beautiful mansion. The owner of all this wealth, Lord Desbrow, is found murdered one morning. His friend, Hilton Barrymore, was the last man at the house the night of the crime. I will pass over a space of some years to the scene of a month ago. The place Paris. The scene, as before, a mansion—this time the home of a well-known banker. 'Tis a stormy night without. A man named Langford, who has appeared before in the story, but of whom I have not yet spoken, visits this banker. You will probably know who the latter is."

Paul, whose eyes were almost bulging from his head, moved uneasily in his chair, and the old man, noticing this, hastened to proceed.

"They quarrel, the banker and Langford,—I will not say with what result. Suffice it to say that the next day the body of the caller, Langford, is found lying in the shadow of Notre Dame with knife wounds in his breast which have been the means of ending his life. A thin trail of blood is found leading almost to the home of this banker. Shall I proceed further with my narrative? Shall I make known the name of this banker?" The old man here halted and again observed the effects of his words. Paul, now ghastly pale, grasped the wine-glass and drained its contents.

"No, no, stop—no more of this horrible tale. No more of it, I say," he exclaimed, and he placed his hands over his ears as if to shut out the sound of the old man's voice.

"Not so loud—not so loud, Monsieur. It is now the time for you to keep your head clear—you must not lose your temper. In me you have a friend who will not betray the smallest secret. In me you have a silent friend—that is, as long as you pay me as well as you paid my dear deceased friend, Monsieur Langford."

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Paul in real anguish. "Again I am at the mercy of a scoundrel—why will not death end it all? No, Rosabel—I must live for her sake—yes, for her sake." Then turning to the old man, he exclaimed in a hissing tone, "And as for you, what is the price of your miserable silence?"

"Oh, you have come to terms quicker than I had expected. Well, I will be reasonable, the first time; say 50,000 francs for to-night."

"No, no; you would ruin me—no, I cannot pay such prices."

"Very well, the door is open as before. You should know that I must live—ah, 'tis many years I have slaved and worked to make my fortune, and now that it is within my grasp you would cheat me of it. Do you know that I could get 50,000 francs

from the police? They offer that much for the capture of the Notre Dame murderer. Perhaps I had better go to them."

"No, no; I will give you what you ask—I will give you what you ask." So saying, Paul drew forth a book and wrote a check for the amount demanded and handed it to the old man, who read it carefully and said:

"I find it correct in all its details. We have settled our business most amicably to-night—let's drink to success in our respective ventures."

The old man lifted his glass and drank the contents, while Paul threw his glass on the floor in a rage.

"An end to this—I must be off," he exclaimed angrily.

So saying he quitted the room and was soon on his way home with a sadder heart than he had possessed when he strutted to the resort earlier in the evening.

A half hour later the old gentleman also came out of the resort, and entering a cab that was waiting for him at some short distance down the street, was hastily driven away.

The cab was driven in an irregular direction until it turned into the Rue St. Peres, where it halted. The old man now alighted and walked some dis-

126 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

tance until he paused before a large apartment house. Climbing the stairs he adjusted a key in the lock and entered.

Once inside, the aged figure became more alert. He ascended the stairs leading to the third floor and again paused before a door. Opening this and entering, the white beard and wig were hastily removed and we now behold, instead of the old man, Monsieur Murdock Montague.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PALAIS CLUB.

PAUL DE FERE could have been observed walking through the streets in an uncertain manner after his meeting with the old man at Pierre's Resort. He was downcast and almost heart-broken, for again he was in the power of some one, he knew not whom, that knew his terrible secret. He felt that he ought to end all, but could not think of committing suicide. No, there was always hope. That measure could be taken as a last resort. There was yet time. Should the report become widely circulated he could then act.

He muttered incoherently on his entire journey home, and any one, who could have seen him as he now acted, would have, without doubt, pronounced him out of his right senses.

Arriving at the gate he met the detective, who appeared in a very poor frame of mind and appearance. His clothes were badly soiled and deranged and he had several marks on his face which conclusively showed that Victor's efforts had not been

128 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

entirely in vain. Paul observed all this in an instant, and exclaimed :

“ Here! Here! what’s this? What has happened?”

“ Oh, almost everything. That man I was to watch attacked me to-night. He stole behind me and struck me with a heavy weapon of some sort. Had I not been taken unawares, or had the fellow come before me face to face, I would have thrashed him soundly. As it was, however, I gave him as much as I received with interest,” gruffly replied the detective, who did not want his employer to know that he had been entirely out-fought by Victor.

“ You evidently must have done well, if, as you say, he appears worse than you do,” answered Paul, who, though he desired to keep Rosabel and Victor separated, in order that she might not gain any grounds for suspicion of the real truth, admired Victor for his pluck. Hiding a smile, he entered the house and went direct to his room.

.

The Palais Club, the representative society organization of Paris, is a magnificent structure of white marble. Two stories in height, nearly two hundred feet square, and with four acres of lawn surrounding its beautiful building, it makes one of the sights of the metropolis. It is the favorite re-

sort of the élite of Paris, and only those that are lavish with their wealth can habituate or visit this famous resort.

Clubmen returning from the theater or opera invariably visit here for a few hours, meeting their friends and indulging in a quite smoke.

Paul de Fere is seen wending his way in the direction of this club, for he has been one of its members for many years. Of late he has attended more regularly than was wont to be his custom, for he finds diversion there, and is now approaching the edifice bent on entering and diverting his mind from the thoughts which seem bent on driving him mad.

As we approach with him, we behold how beautiful it all appears in the darkness of the night. Here and there the lights streaming through the heavy window curtains and casting their reflections on the lawn below make a pretty scene. He reaches the large gate which is a check to those not members. Showing his card to the attendant at the gate, he is instantly admitted. He walks leisurely to the entrance hall. Pressing an electric bell, the door is opened by another attendant, and this time being recognized, he is instantly ushered within. Here he is relieved of his hat, coat and cane, and he then strolls forth into the reception-room, but this he

finds quite deserted. He resumes his way and enters the reading-room, meeting here several friends with whom he chats on the topics of the day. But what seems to be the chief subject of conversation is in regard to the discovery of the theft of the De Fere banking institution, and although he tries to change the disagreeable topic he finds it almost impossible. To make it more embarrassing, he is complimented on his great skill in detecting the criminal, and some of the more interested hearers tell him that he ought to apply for the position of Chief of the Detective Bureau. He pretends to be greatly flattered, and laughingly takes his leave, for he knows that should he be compelled to longer dwell upon the subject he would eventually contradict some statement which might be the means of arousing suspicion.

Passing into the smoking-room he espied an unoccupied settee and hurriedly availed himself of it. The air of the room was laden with tobacco smoke, for the room was the favorite resort of the older members, who could here take what they were pleased to term "solid comfort."

Having seated himself and drawn forth a choice Havana, he leisurely stretched out his hand for the lighter on the smoking-table, when it came in contact with the hand of another.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," exclaimed Paul, as he looked up and beheld the face of one of the members whom he had often seen before, but with whom he was not intimately acquainted.

"Certainly, certainly, I dare say the fault is mine," answered the stranger, who sat within a few feet of Paul, and who was none other than Murdock Montague, also a member of this supposedly select club, and who belonged more as a matter of business than anything else. Both having secured a light, they smoked on in silence for a time, when Murdock ventured to say:

"Fine weather we are having for this time of the year?"

"Yes; but I dare say it will be cooler to-morrow. I see the Weather Bureau predicts 'cold weather'?"

"Is that so? I had not remarked it. But then for myself I prefer colder weather, for it generally infuses one with new life. Don't you think so?" asked Murdock.

"I have always thought so, yes. But when one is not feeling well, he cares little enough about the weather," answered Paul dejectedly.

"But I think, if I may venture to say so, that you look exceedingly well."

"Ah, that may be, but worry of the mind is the

132 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

worst of all diseases, for while the body thrives and appears strong and healthy, the brain shrivels up and becomes inactive."

"I suppose so, I suppose so. But, thank heaven, I have never had enough trouble and worry to bring on this dreaded illness," said Murdock in a tone which rang with sincerity.

"Pray tell me," asked Paul, who had been looking into the face of the stranger and who could not remember ever having spoken to him before, "what is your name. Your face seems familiar enough, but I cannot say that I have ever spoken to you before."

"Then I have the better of you, for I already know yours. However, I will introduce myself to you, Monsieur de Fere. My name is Montague, Murdock Montague."

"Montague, Montague," slowly murmured Paul, as if trying to recall the name. "It is singular, but I have never heard the name before, although I know we have both been members of this club for some time."

"Yes, yes, I have been a member nearly six years now," answered Murdock, who was trying to get intimately acquainted with Paul.

"Quite a time ; but, Monsieur Montague, here is my hand. I am glad we have at last met." Say-

ing this, Paul extended his hand, which was warmly grasped by Murdock.

A half hour later they were engaged in a friendly conversation, and any one seeing them as they then appeared would have thought them lifelong friends. Paul in his present state of mind was only too glad to have some friend with whom he could talk and at the same time keep his mind from the many horrible thoughts.

Paul told Murdock much of his business adventures, and Murdock, being a smooth talker, interested Paul greatly with his narratives of travel.

It grew late and they were somewhat reluctant to break up the meeting which had been so pleasant to both. They exchanged cards, however, and promised thereafter to meet often. After a hearty handshake they parted for the night.

Paul, as he strolled home with more energy than he had displayed earlier in the evening, thought, "This new friend is evidently an excellent gentleman. I'm glad I met him. At least I will find much diversion in his interesting conversation, and as he appears to be unusually wealthy, perhaps, should I become more intimately acquainted, I could negotiate a loan from him which would stave off the bank's insolvency and save me from ruination."

134 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Murdock, as he left Paul, had thoughts almost identical with those of Paul, for he thought that should he become closely acquainted with the banker he could learn much to his advantage as to the latter's wealth, etc.; then, as he had learned during their conversation that De Fere had a daughter, he thought that could he win her for his bride, an immense fortune would be his. He knew that many obstacles were in his way in accomplishing the last project, but he also knew that the chance was worth the trying.

CHAPTER XV.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA.

THE final night of the opera has arrived. The squares in the vicinity of the Grand Opera House are crowded with vehicles of every description, which, having conveyed their occupants to this grand palace of music, are now waiting for the final strains of the opera, that they may again convey them to their abodes. Crowds of people line the streets, and so elaborately is the Opera House itself illuminated, that the Apollo, raising aloft his lyre on the summit of the pediment, is as easily discernible as in the brightest of daylight. Nothing is heard but the din of voices as here and there, in the surging mass of humanity leading to the entrance gate, some friend or acquaintance is recognized. The police have plenty to do to keep the poorer class at a safe distance from the aristocracy. Carriage after carriage is drawn up to the canopy-covered entrance which protects the richly-dressed occupants from the eyes of the curious public.

Our attention is directed to a carriage which has

136 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

just arrived at the entrance. The door being opened, Rosabel and Paul alight. They pass through the corinthian columns under the gallery which supports the seven busts of famous musicians, including Mozart, Beethoven, and other masters, and enter the grand vestibule. While Rosabel removes her wraps in the dressing-room, Paul, with cynical eye, observes the beautiful statues of Lully, Romeau, Gluck, and Handel that stand conspicuously in the lobby. Rosabel having returned, Paul leads the way up the grand staircase, which in itself is an indubitable masterpiece, to the corridor which leads to the foyer. At last they reach their box and enter. We are dazzled by the beautiful scene presented to view. The auditorium, one of the largest of its kind, can easily seat several thousand people. The ceiling was painted by Lenepven, which is in itself an assurance of its beauty in design, color and effect.

The house is crowded. Almost every seat is occupied. Surely this is a gala night in the history of this already historic house. The orchestra has now made its appearance, and a few moments later have started playing a selection of one of the masters.

A shower of applause rewards them on the completion of their really fine rendition, and after a

A Night at the Opera. 137

moment's delay, the curtain rises on the first act.

A beautiful scene greets the eye, but it is not our purpose to go into the details of the opera; suffice to say that at the close of the act a murmur of satisfaction reechoes throughout the house.

During the interval Paul adjourns to the smoking-room, and Rosabel, with expectant eye, looks from right to left. Can she be expecting to see some one whom she knows? Perhaps. She looks carefully from balcony to balcony, and a look of disappointment appears on her face as she settles back in her chair, as if having given up the search. A moment later she starts and her face becomes flushed. She must have found the object of her search for she continues to look in the direction of the first balcony and now makes a sign as of recognition with her fan and faintly smiles. Our attention is thus directed to the balcony which seems to so absorb her attention, and after a little scrutinizing, we behold Victor looking toward the box occupied by Rosabel. His face is also possessed with a radiant smile, and as he observes that Rosabel recognizes him he appears supremely happy.

The orchestra has again begun playing its interlude to the second act, and our attention is again diverted from the two lovers. Looking up at the box

1

138 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

occupied by Paul and Rosabel, we observe that Paul has returned and that he is accompanied by a stranger.

Rosabel presumes him to be some business acquaintance of her father, and is almost positive she has never seen the gentleman before.

"Rosabel," said Paul as he and the stranger enter the box, "this is an acquaintance of mine, Monsieur Murdock Montague." Then to Murdock, "Monsieur Montague, this is my daughter Rosabel."

"This meeting affords me great pleasure," bowingly responded Murdock, commanding his gentlest tone of voice.

"Have a seat, Monsieur," and Paul proffered Murdock a chair.

"We met by chance in the smoking-room," said Paul to Rosabel, "and I thought it just as well to have us all sit together. I have already told Monsieur, that had I known he intended attending the opera this evening I would have had him accompany us."

"I had no idea of coming until last evening, Monsieur, but believe me I thank you heartily for your kindness," said Murdock.

The curtain having arisen their conversation was cut short.

A Night at the Opera. 139

The second act over, Paul did not this time adjourn to the smoking-room, and a conversation was indulged in between the three. Murdock tried to engage Rosabel in conversation, but she was an uninterested listener and he found it quite a task.

The curtain having been lowered on the last act, the usual commotion attending the close of a successful opera resulted. When all was over Paul invited Murdock to visit him. Murdock having given his thanks, politely made his adieux and hurried out.

Victor, who with heavy heart had seen all, had felt from the first that this was not the first time he had seen the stranger who was now sitting in Paul's box, but where, he could not remember. At least he had little liking for him, and he determined to write Rosabel a note telling her of his dislike. Was this a lover's jealousy? He went out after the third act and hastily wrote a note, which he resolved, if possible, to hand to Rosabel. He waited patiently at the carriage entrance for the chance, although the night air was piercingly cold.

"Ah, here they are," he suddenly exclaimed, as Paul and Rosabel came out arm in arm.

The number of their carriage was called. A moment later and the vehicle was drawn up to the

entrance. Paul assisted Rosabel into the carriage and stopped to give the order to the driver.

This was Victor's chance. With one bound he was at the door of the carriage, and tapping lightly on the window nearest Rosabel, was rewarded for his trouble by her opening the door and extending her hand. A moment later she had the note in her hand and had slammed the door. Victor had been not a moment too soon, for Paul now entered and the carriage was rapidly driven away.

At the first tapping on the door of the carriage Rosabel wondered what it could mean ; then looking out, she could have screamed as she beheld Victor's pale face. Keeping her presence of mind, she opened the door and grasped the extended particle of paper, exclaiming, possibly for effect, as she loudly closed the door, that "it had not been tightly closed."

As they drove home her father spoke to her continually and she answered him usually in short phrases, as if not interested. Her thoughts, we must remember, were mostly of the note which she held tightly in her hand. Her father was quick to perceive this sudden change in her actions and once asked her if she was ill. This warned her that she must be more careful and thereafter she thought less of the missive. She was glad when,

A Night at the Opera. 141

a short time later, the carriage rolled up to their home.

Paul alighted and assisted Rosabel from the carriage. Saying a hasty "Good night" she hurried off to her room.

Paul watched her as she hurriedly entered the house and nodded his head as if wondering what it all could mean. Dismissing the carriage, he, too, entered the house.

CHAPTER XVI.

TROUBLED MINDS.

MURDOCK had made it his business to meet Paul on several occasions, after their first meeting at the Palais Club, and during their conversations he had learned much. He had learned of the discharge of Victor, and how the latter had been helped from childhood by the kind-hearted Monsieur de Fere. It all seemed a very pathetic story as related by the latter, but Murdock knew that, could it all have been told to him, strange happenings on Paul's part might have become known. He also learned that Paul was to accompany Rosabel to the opera on the coming Wednesday, the last night of the season, and he resolved that he would be there to get his first glance at her whom he had already decided should become his wife. Accordingly he made careful preparation, and his appearance was all that could have been desired. As he appeared this night he would have dazzled the eye of many a fair lady. He had planned to arrive at the Opera House a little late, then, relying on the fact of Paul being a great smoker, he would await him in the

smoking-room and depend on his strategy to accomplish the rest. Of course there was a great chance of his plans not turning out as he would have them, but he determined to at least make the attempt.

He arrived at the opera after the commencement of the performance and sauntered into the smoking-room, at the same time possessing himself of a seat near the entrance where he could command a view of all who entered. For quite some time he sat undisturbed in meditation and smoked, when the sudden entry of a large number of gentlemen told him that the first act was over. His eye was more alert than ever. He looked from right to left. Ah! he could not have thought better, for here, strolling toward him with easy grace, came Paul. A moment later he heard him exclaim :

“Why, Monsieur Montague, you here! Surely this is a lucky meeting.”

Murdock started up from his chair as if greatly surprised and said :

“Oh, you quite startled me.” Then after a short pause. “By Jove, we seem to meet at all times and places.”

This caused Paul to laugh, and after seating himself he ventured to say :

“Well, I am by no means sorry that we have met.

144 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Had I known that you cared for opera I should have certainly asked you the other evening to accompany us. But you must accept my apologies for my lack of courtesy."

"Tut, tut. I rarely attend. This evening, however, having no other diversion, I thought a night at the opera, especially the last night of the season, would pass the evening pleasantly, otherwise I would not have attended."

"How did you enjoy the first act?" ventured Paul, who thought that Murdock had witnessed it.

"Splendidly," said that man of resources. "It's a grand production, and although I am little or no critic, I should say that it will come near reaching the top of the pedestal for the season's successes."

"So think I," said Paul.

For a short time they smoked in silence, when Murdock ventured to say :

"Are you also alone?"

"Oh, no, not alone. For, like you, I care little enough for music, although I do enjoy a good production with a star cast; but my daughter, Rosabel, she is infatuated with it, so much so that I engage a box yearly for the season of opera. Oh, by the way, you have not yet met her, have you?" exclaimed Paul, as it dawned upon him that this would be an excellent opportunity for an introduction.

"No, I have not yet had the pleasure."

"Well, you shall meet her to-night. You will witness the remainder of the opera from my box."

Murdock's eyes opened perceptibly, for he had not expected or even hoped for this good fortune.

"I thank you, Monsieur de Fere, but I would not inconvenience you. I have my seat and would only make it uncomfortable for you," said Murdock.

"Nonsense ; there are only us two, the box accommodates six. Come, there is plenty of room. Come !"

The music of the orchestra now reached their ears and Paul hurriedly continued :

"Come, come, the curtain will soon rise."

Murdock needed no further coaxing on the subject, but followed Paul and entered the box after him. We have already seen with what result.

The play over, Murdock hurried off as we have seen, but he halted as he reached the entrance, for he was greatly infatuated with Rosabel and desired another glimpse of her before she was gone. Standing on the marble steps he saw her come out with Paul, and a moment later saw them both enter the carriage. The carriage having started, he watched it until it disappeared from view. He stood still for a time deep in thought, and then buttoning his coat well around him started off. Victor

146 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

also had watched the carriage as it receded in the distance, and then he also started for home. Walking quickly, with head bowed down deep in thought, he kept on his way. Raising his head for an instant, he beheld before him the very man he had seen in Monsieur de Fere's box that evening. He decided to follow and learn what he could of his rival, as he supposed him to be.

If he expected to find anything of importance by following Murdock he was greatly mistaken, for the latter slowly sauntered to the Palais Club and entered. For a long time Victor stood in the shadow of the trees, staring blankly at the large building, then he started to retrace his steps, thinking all the time :

"I have made little or no progress in establishing my innocence, and my funds are getting decidedly low. Though I believe Rosabel still loves me, I will never be able to marry her unless I can prove my innocence. Without work I could not support her, and it would be rash of me were I to attempt to support her on the little money I still possess. I must prove my innocence or else all hope is gone. She still loves me or else she would not have written the letter telling me to attend the opera. She asked me why I didn't write. Surely there is much mystery in Monsieur de Fere's household, for I have

written over a dozen letters, none of which have reached her. I dare say the mail is intercepted and my letters find room in her father's waste-basket. Oh, cruel fate, why am I so afflicted? Ah, 'tis God's will, I dare say, and I must abide by it. Who knows but what He already wills that I am soon, by some miracle or other, to be proven innocent. While there is life there is hope, is the old adage. I have life, there must be hope. I will work with the utmost hope, and perchance I will yet know the man who has been the means of blighting my whole career.

He had reached his new abode, for he had been compelled to move from his luxuriant apartments into more modest ones to reduce his expenses. He entered and went to bed with a lighter heart than for some days previous, having resolved to renew his efforts on the morrow in his fight for innocence.

.

We leave Victor and return to Paul, sitting in his drawing-room. He wonders what Rosabel's actions can mean. Probably Murdock has impressed her. He hopes so, and at last decides this to be the reason of her unusual actions. He now recalls that she asked many questions about him as they drove home and seemed to take especial interest in all the

148 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

new facts which Paul told her. As he prepares to retire to his sleeping apartment he mutters to himself, a smile flitting over his countenance: "They already love each other, I can see that. The match will easily be brought about. Then the matter of securing a loan will be a small task."

Paul de Fere, shrewd schemer that you are, you little dream what a task you have undertaken. Everything seems to be working at your will. But beware, the end is not far. You, instead of outwitting others, are daily being drawn nearer the trap which eventually will have you in its grasp. Rosabel will never marry Murdock. You will never again be able to lift yourself from the pit into which you have been gradually falling. You had better beware ere it is too late.

.

Rosabel having reached her room, could scarcely wait until she read the contents of Victor's note, Lighting the lamp, she with trembling hand spread out the crumpled piece of paper and read:

DEAREST ROSABEL:—

"Excuse haste and my liberty in writing this note, but I knew it was my only chance of conveying my thoughts to you. Beware of the man to whom you were introduced to-night. I don't know why, but

I fear that he is not of the sort you would care to be associated with. I received your letter and have read it many times. It is the one thing that gives me hope. I must hurry, as the opera is over. With love, I am as always,

“Faithfully yours,

“VICTOR.”

On completion of her reading she burst into tears. Then after a space she pondered :

“He warns me to beware of Monsieur Montague. I wonder what he means? What are his suspicions? Can it be that Monsieur Montague is not what he is represented to be? No, no, that cannot be, for why should father know him and speak so highly of him? I cannot believe it. Victor probably is a little jealous but I will write him and tell him he need have little fear in that direction, for I am his promised bride and such I will remain until we are man and wife.”

CHAPTER XVII.

MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS.

VICTOR arose earlier than was his custom on the following morning determined on continuing with new zeal his search for evidence as to his innocence. Having prepared his toilet he hurried to Rupin's Coffee House, where he indulged in a hearty meal. He had expected that long ere this he would have proved to the world that he had been made a victim of a coward's work. He found, however, that he had a hard task before him, and up to this time he had accomplished little or nothing to his purpose. Where could he look to-day? What could be done? He had determined to learn the truth from Monsieur de Fere's own lips, for he had now grave suspicions that he was the author of his downfall, but he restrained himself from doing this when he thought of Rosabel. Having finished his meal, he issued into the street and walked leisurely in a southerly direction with eyes downcast. Suddenly he came to an abrupt halt, for he had come into collision with another pedestrian who, like

Meeting of Old Friends. 151

himself, had paid little or no attention as to where he was going. Victor looked up, bent on proffering his apologies, when he recognized the face of his one-time college friend, Jean Bourgete.

The latter also recognized Victor, and grasping him by the hand as he tried to pass on, exclaimed :

"Why, Victor Gasgoine, how are you? My, but you're quite the last man I expected to meet this morning."

"You probably forget, Monsieur Bourgete, that you are speaking to a man denounced and accepted on all sides as one of the greatest criminals of the year. Surely you must have heard the story?" and Victor tried to force himself from the sturdy grasp of his friend.

"Oh, I heard some sort of a tale, but trust in me, for I never believed one word of it from the first," answered Jean, as he drew Victor to one side so they could converse without being overheard.

"Do you mean to say that after having heard all the facts and rumors concerning the case you do not believe me guilty?" asked Victor, excitedly.

"Assuredly I do. Having known you so long and having been the closest of friends, it would be little like friendship were I to turn my back to you now. No, no, Victor, you have been greatly mistaken in me, and I hope you will soon think differ-

ently. There, give me your hand," and as Jean said this he extended his hand.

"Thank heavens, I have still one friend," exclaimed Victor, as he grasped the extended hand, "thank heavens I have still one friend."

"Tut, tut, you talk despondently. I dare say you have many friends, and you will soon find that I speak truly. Come, let's refresh ourselves and at the same time talk of olden times."

Jean lead the way to a neighboring café and soon they were comfortably installed in one of the closed compartments chatting of college days.

Jean Bourgete was the only son of one of the wealthiest merchants of Paris, and had become acquainted with Victor while attending a college which Victor had also attended. Having roomed together for nearly a year, they had had ample time to learn the nature and habits of each other.

A warm friendship sprang up between them and for a long time after their graduation they were continually together. Their intimacy had been somewhat severed, however, when Jean started on a tour through Europe with his parents.

He had just returned a week previous to this day, when he had the unexpected meeting with Victor. Having chatted for some time on trivial matters, Jean asked for the story of Victor's trouble with the

bank. The latter told his friend the whole story, as he knew it, and when he had completed, Jean arose excitably and exclaimed :

"I thought so. Why, man, don't you know that you've been made the victim of a plot? It's clear as day. Can't you see through it all? Some one still in the bank's employ is the real culprit. You surely have some suspicions. Now, who do you think would be the most likely to gain by your downfall?"

"Oh, I could accuse no one, for I never could prove my assertions," meekly answered Victor, who was now more than satisfied that Monsieur de Fere knew a great deal more than he could afford to tell concerning the bank robbery. He did not tell his friend of his suspicions, for he knew full well the latter would not hesitate to make his thoughts known to the police. Victor tried to avoid this for Rosabel's sake.

"Come, we must work together. In your present dejected spirits, you will never clear yourself," said Jean, who was a young man of great determination. "Speak up; certainly you must suspect some one?"

"I have some suspicions, Jean, but for the present I would prefer not to divulge their nature," answered Victor.

154 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

“Oh, well, then, as you will ; but I can only tell you, that the longer you delay the harder the task grows, for while you wait, the real culprit will be doing his utmost to destroy all and any proofs that might exist as to his guilt,” answered Jean disappointedly.

The topic of conversation changed, and a short while after Jean prepared to take his departure. Before going, however, a thought seemed to possess him, and he exclaimed :

“ Oh, Victor, I had almost forgotten that there is to be a reception and masque ball at our winter residence Friday evening, and I want you to be present.”

“ No, no, that would never do, for I’m shunned in all circles,” answered Victor.

“ Ah, then, that is all the further reason why you should attend. Show yourself and defy those who have resented you.”

“ No, I could not do that. Only think, Jean, of your parents. The disgrace. What they would say. Think also of the scandal. I dare say two-thirds of the guests would leave, were they to become aware of the fact that I was present at your house.”

“ Father told me that he thought you a man incapable of the crime you are charged with com-

mitting, and I know he'd be glad to have you present. As to the scandal, father is too generous a man for them to hobnob. His loans have saved many of them from utter ruin. They will need him again, and therefore they cannot afford to lose his friendship. No, I'm positive there will be no scene or comment on your appearance. Besides, it is to be a masque ball and you can don some unique dress," said Jean, who was evidently bent on having Victor present, no matter what the result.

"No, I cannot go. It is not my disposition to be amongst those who would prefer my room to my company. I appreciate your great kindness and—but no, I cannot go."

"But what a chance you'd have to look and stare at your former employers, Monsieur de Fere for instance, and——"

"Monsieur de Fere!" exclaimed Victor, as he arose with a frown on his brow.

"Why, yes, Monsieur de Fere; but why do you start at mention of his name," asked Jean, as he watched the facile movements of Victor.

"'Tis nothing, nothing," replied Victor, in a calmer tone, "only, I did not think it was his custom to attend social events."

"Why, yes, he is always invited to all the social functions, but I dare say his daughter and his

wealth are the principal reasons for his popularity. His daughter, Rosabel, will no doubt be the belle of the ball."

"Why, is she also to be present?" asked Victor with sudden eagerness.

"She has been invited. I am almost certain she will attend," answered Jean, who wondered why Victor should be so interested in her.

"And you say there will be no trouble were I also to attend," ventured Victor, who, on discovering that Rosabel was to be present, had suddenly changed his stand in regard to accepting Jean's invitation.

"I'm positive there'll be no trouble. You'll go, won't you?" asked Jean.

"Yes," answered Victor after, a short pause.

A few moments later they had parted, Victor with new hope and Jean with a puzzled mind, for he could not help wondering what had been the cause of so suddenly making Victor change his mind in regard to attending the masquerade ball.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN EXCITING EPISODE.

THAT same afternoon Rosabel took her customary drive in her coupé through the Park. The day being a beautiful one, the Boulevard was accordingly thronged with vehicles of all descriptions, for everybody seemed intent on taking advantage of the fair day to refresh themselves in the pure air. Driving down the Bois Boulogne, the coupé and its fair occupant attracted marked attention, for the team, which had been brought from Arabia, was pronounced by horsemen to be the finest in that section of the country, while the livery was of the latest Parisian style and the coupé of the finest make.

It was small wonder, then, that the public should stare in admiration at Rosabel as she was driven rapidly past them. It was not Rosabel's custom, to do her shopping in the afternoon, generally performing that duty early in the morning when the rush was not so great. This day, however, desir-

158 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

ing some article which she desired to use the next evening at the masquerade ball, she made an exception to her rule.

Having informed the coachman of her intention, she was driven to the shopping district, where she procured the several articles she wanted.

The ride home was then begun and the horses were driven leisurely in the direction of the Boulevard de Sebastopol. Here and there as she passed different conveyances on the Boulevard, she would recognize some one with whom she was acquainted and a sign of recognition would be passed. Her thoughts, however, reverted to Victor. She wondered why she had not seen him. What were his reasons for disliking Monsieur Montague? What was he doing? She had watched Murdock Montague closely on several occasions since receiving his note, but thus far she had not noticed anything that should cause any one to particularly dislike him. She thought of the Bourgete reception which was to take place the next night. Poor Victor! could he but be present. When would all his troubles end? When would he be able to prove his innocence?

What's that? She is thrown back in her seat. The horses are going at an unusual rate of speed. Every moment this rate is increasing. What can

An Exciting Episode. 159

be the trouble? She calls to the driver to be more careful.

Good God! They are running away. Faster and faster they go, the coupé swaying from side to side. The driver struggles desperately to control the horses, but to little avail. See, he has lost the grasp of the reins. The crowded Boulevard before them opens as if by magic and the infuriated horses dash on unheeded. They continue to dash along, increasing their speed at every spurt. Now and then a pedestrian passing on his way, being attracted by the noise, rushes into the street and waves his hat. Ah, 'tis useless, for this only frightens the horses and they dash on in greater fury. Again another attempts to gain a hold on the reins. This also is fruitless, and the would-be rescuer is roughly thrust to one side and badly shaken up. Before them now in the distance looms the fountain with its heavy iron railing surrounding it.

Heavens! should the horses, at their present rate of speed, dash into it, it would mean certain death to the horses, driver, and possibly Rosabel.

Can no one stop them? It seems almost impossible. People hold their breath and shut their eyes as the impending catastrophe seems almost certain.

Nearer and nearer to destruction they dash.

160 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Suddenly, as the carriage is but a few yards away from the fountain, a figure dashes out and springs at the horses' heads.

The man must be mad to risk his life so recklessly. A cloud of dust envelopes the coupé, and when it rises, the horses are found lying in a mass on the stone pavement within a few feet of the iron railing of the fountain. Two lives have been saved.

A crowd is soon collected, and the brave man who so cleverly brought the horses to submission is eagerly looked for.

A man covered with dust, and with clothing badly torn and deranged, emerges from a mass of wriggling horses, and pushing through the crowd, is soon lost to view.

Rosabel, who has just recovered her self-possession, looks up in time to see Victor hurrying off. She screams, almost faints, as she recognizes him and observes that his clothing is torn.

She knows that it would do little good to call out his name, and she therefore controls her emotions. Another team is procured, and in a short time she is driven home.

Her thoughts are now all of Victor, for she fears that he has been badly hurt.

The evening papers state that an unknown man

An Exciting Episode. 161

performs one of the most heroic acts of the decade, etc. Monsieur de Fere, not knowing that Victor was the hero, offers the man who rescued his daughter a reward of a thousand francs.

It is almost needless to say Victor does not claim the reward.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRATAGEM.

It is the night of the day on which the rescue of Rosabel occurred. The Palais Club is well filled, as usual, and Monsieur Paul de Fere can be seen at his accustomed seat in the smoking-room. He wears a look of worryment and stares continually into the corner of the room. And small wonder, for to-day he has received another letter from the mysterious old man, making an appointment at Pierre's Resort for that very night at the usual time. He has still one hour before taking his leave for the place in which he passed so terrible an ordeal only too short a time ago. He knows that he cannot stand the strain much longer. The strain on his mind and pocketbook must, like all things, close sooner or later. He had congratulated himself on being rid of all tormentors on the death of Langford, but here he was again being continually pressed for hush-money. He was sadder this night than usual, and even the fact that Rosabel was saved from certain death does not lessen his sorrow.

He is suddenly startled by observing Monsieur

Montague entering the room. He staggers rather than arises from his seat and extends his hand. They clasp hands. Monsieur Montague's hand is as cold as his own.

"What ails you, Monsieur?" asked Paul in quivering tones, as he observes his friend's pale look.

"Nothing, nothing," answered Murdock, who evidently had not expected meeting Paul.

"You are ill," ventured Paul, staring in Murdock's face.

"No, only I was just about to depart," answered the latter hurriedly.

Paul now glanced at the clock that hung on the wall close by, saw that it was time that he should also depart, and he at once became eager to go.

"Are you about to depart also?" asked Murdock.

"No, no; I will remain here for a time at least," answered Paul, resuming his seat.

"Good night," coldly replied Murdock as he hurried out, saying under his breath: "You hypocrite, no sooner am I gone than you, too, will go. You will not neglect to be at the meeting. I wish we had not met. You may still retain a picture of my features in your mind, and although I will be disguised, you may remember and recognize me. But I must hurry." A moment later he was gone.

164 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Paul also changed his mind about remaining at the club, for no sooner was Murdock gone than he, too, hurried from the club, and with cape tightly drawn around his form, he hurried in the direction of Pierre's famous resort.

Paul reached the place fully a quarter of an hour before the appointed time and entered. As before, the sight before him disgusted him, and he anxiously waited for the moments to pass.

It is said that in trouble the moments seem like years, and thus it was with Paul. The clock now began tolling the ninth hour, the time when his mysterious friend was to appear. The echo had not died out when, as on the occasion of the first meeting, the old gentleman appeared on the threshold of the door of the resort.

As at the last meeting, they adjourned to a private compartment, and again, as before, a bottle of wine was ordered by the old man.

The door having been secured, the old man turned up the lamp, which only added to the somber appearance of the room, and rubbing his hands together, said :

"We seem to understand each other now, for you have attended this meeting with little or no trouble."

"Come, come, what amount do you ask to-night?" impatiently asked Paul.

"Oh, to terms so quickly? It seems incredible; but, then, they always said that I was possessed of great business instinct. I dare say that not another man in Paris could command money from Monsieur Paul de Fere, the President——"

"Stop, I say!" commanded Paul, bringing his clenched fist heavily on the table. "Not another word."

"As you will, as you will, but I was only say——"

"To business, I have no time for trifling. Name your amount. But, mind, it must be moderate," loudly declared Paul.

"All right. Let it be the same as the last time with 20,000 francs added," softly said the aged blackmailer, as he rubbed his hands together with enthusiasm.

"What, 70,000 francs! No, no, not that amount. You will ruin me!" exclaimed Paul, as he sank back in his chair.

"You, I suppose, desire to have me understand that you will not pay any such sum. All right. I made up my mind before attending this meeting to-night, that I would not babble with you as to the price, but that were you to refuse payment I would report to the police that the murderer of Notre Dame was none other than Monsieur Paul de Fere."

166 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

“ Oh, God ! to be at the mercy of such a scoundrel ! Have you no pity ? ”

“ Ha ! ha !—pity. You should have shown pity to Langford when you foully murdered him,” exclaimed the old man, and then burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

“ Stop this, I say, stop it ! Any one within twenty feet of the room can hear you.” Paul by this time was trembling from head to foot and could scarcely speak. He, after a pause, at length said, “ I will pay the amount you ask.”

“ Ah, that’s well. There, calm yourself, or you will become ill. Here is pen and ink.”

Monsieur Paul drew forth his check-book and wrote out a check for the amount demanded, taking an unusually long time in writing it.

He was no doubt doing this for a purpose, and this was proved a certainty when a moment later he drew forth from his pocket a small revolver and held it under the table, while with the other hand he still continued in his writing of the check. When he had finished he handed it to the old man and calmly told him to see that it was correct. The old man, who appeared unaware of the danger he was in, adjusted his spectacles and began the perusal of the check. This was Paul’s chance. He drew his revolver quickly and pulled the trigger.

A shot rang throughout the place, but could have done little damage, for a desperate struggle was soon taking place between the two men. To add to the confusion in the room, the light was overturned and the struggle continued in the darkness. A sound as from the falling of a body was heard and a few moments later the old man hurried from the room. Passing into the outer room, he whispered something into the ear of the proprietor of the place and hurried out.

A half hour later, Paul staggered from the room as if under the influence of liquor, and issued into the night air. During the struggle the old man had shown his superiority, and had rendered Paul unconscious. The cool air greatly refreshed him, and he reached home in a sad frame of mind and body.

CHAPTER XX.

AT THE BOURGETE MANSION.

THE sound of music can be heard issuing from the mansion, while the lawn surrounding it is here and there dotted by brilliant-colored electric lights strung from tree to tree, making the scene an imposing one, while the reflections on the green lawn make it appear like a scene from fairyland. The masquerade ball is in full sway.

Most every one is dressed in costume, some in the strangest dress imaginable, some in grotesque garb, while others are dressed in gorgeous and costly array. One would scarcely know one's own friend here.

Paul and Rosabel have just arrived. They are not in costume. They are received by the host and hostess and then adjourn to the dancing-room. Here Murdock greets them, and while the variously dressed dancers whirl by, they chat together.

Rosabel cares little enough for his conversation, but as she had promised her father, only that day, that as it meant so much to him, she would treat Murdock at least civilly, she tried to appear as

interested as possible ; but while he spoke she could not refrain from thinking of Victor. Had he been seriously hurt in rescuing her? She feared the worst. This scene of gaiety has little charm for her and she longs for the time when Victor would be able to be always with her. Ah, but when would that time be? She has often wondered, when talking with her father, why he answered her so abruptly when she asked him about Victor.

Murdock now interrupts her train of thought by asking her for the next dance. She would refrain, but the words of her father, "that his welfare and possibly his whole fortune depend upon Murdock," reechoes in her ears, and she half-heartily acquiesces.

The music having begun, they glide off, and Paul looks on with smiling face, believing that a match between the two is a matter of small difficulty.

He believes that Rosabel now loves Murdock, and congratulates himself on the fact that Murdock, having won his daughter, when informed that her father is almost a bankrupt would scarcely refuse to help him in the matter of a loan.

Paul, thinking it best to leave the two together, saunters into the wine-room, where he refreshes himself and meets several of his social and business acquaintances. They are all his friends as long as he still continues to be Monsieur Paul de Fere,

170 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

President of the De Fere Banking Institute, but would be entire strangers should he lose that title and wealth.

Our attention is now directed to the door of the conservatory which leads into the room where the dancing is in progress. Who is the figure clothed as a monk who leans against the passageway and stares so sternly at the scene of mirth and gaiety before him ?

The black mask hides his countenance, but surely that form is familiar. Yes, we can almost be positive. It is Victor Gasgoine who has attended the reception in the guise of an Italian monk. His exterior carries out the idea, but surely no monk ever wore so dark a frown as appears on Victor's brow. Can he be angry ? Yes, he must be, and we are soon able to determine the cause, for as Rosabel and Murdock whirl suddenly past he involuntarily makes one step forward as if he would hurl himself on Murdock.

His thoughts are not those one would expect to find occupying the mind of any one at so joyous an occasion.

He wonders whether, after all, Rosabel really cares for him, whether he has been forgotten and whether Murdock has supplanted him in her affections.

If this were so, then life with all its sorrows

would be little to him. Then, again, it seemed right that she should forget him. What was he in the eyes of the world? A criminal of the lowest order, a thief, with little chance of ever proving his innocence. Was it not fair that she should also think him guilty when almost every one else did? Was it not right that she should forget him? Was it not——

But no, no; it did not seem Rosabel's nature for her to forget him. Had she not promised him that, come what would, she would always believe in him?

Ah! they are coming this way.

Victor hurried off and hid behind some large palms in the conservatory, for although he was changed in dress, he knew that Rosabel would be able to recognize him, and he did not wish to have his identity known by the assemblage.

They leisurely walked toward him, and Murdock appeared to be earnestly engaged in talking to her.

They drew nearer and nearer until they were in front of the palms behind which Victor stood. A moment later they had seated themselves upon the bench which stood in the shadow of the palms.

Victor was not of the nature to play the part of eavesdropper, but the only way he could have changed his position would have been to pass out

172 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

in front of them. This he knew would be disastrous, and he therefore resolved that he would remain where he was and pay as little attention to their conversation as was possible.

Murdock continued his conversation in low tones, and now and then Rosabel could have been heard to answer as if she did not desire to listen to him.

Victor's attention was awakened by hearing Rosabel talking in loud tones, while Murdock continued his low mutterings. He kept watch on the latter and suddenly saw him grasp Rosabel by the arm, while she started up and tried to free herself from his grasp. She struggled desperately but Murdock would not release her. This was too much for Victor, and with one bound he was behind Murdock and had knocked him to the marble floor with one blow.

Rosabel, once released, hurried off to her father. Murdock, only stunned, arose in great anger and rushed wildly at Victor. The latter was ready for just such a move, however, and as the two came together Victor secured a hold on Murdock's throat and choked him into submission, while the latter begged piteously for mercy. Murdock's struggles having ceased, Victor placed his unconscious form behind the palms and hurried into the reception-

At the Bourgete Mansion. 173

room and out to the carriage entrance. He was just in time to see Paul's carriage rattle off.

Murdock recovered in a short time, and after arranging his clothing he also left the mansion, but not at all pleased with his night's adventure.

CHAPTER XXI.

DRAWING NEAR THE END.

A WEEK has passed. The troubles of Paul de Fere have multiplied. The match he had arranged between Murdock and Rosabel seems further off than ever, the scene at the Bourgete reception having put that out of the question. The bank is again in the hands of the examiners, they having been sent on to make the yearly examination and report as to the financial standing of the institution. Paul knows only too well that their report will state that the bank is unsound, causing the inevitable run and his financial ruin, and then well, suicide would end it all.

Paul is seated in his drawing-room, in which so many scenes have been enacted, arranging his affairs for the final crash. He had had great hopes of securing a loan from Murdock, but this, like everything else, seemed an utter impossibility. If he could but persuade Rosabel to marry him, then perhaps after all, a loan could be negotiated which would stave off the failure. But no, it would be useless to ask her to do this, for she would only refuse,

and it would only tend to lower her estimation of him. No, he must give up all hope.

He was now aroused from his reverie by the announcement of a visitor, who, he learned from the card which the butler presented, was Murdock Montague. He hesitated. Should he admit him? If he acted the part of a gentleman, no. But then a thought flashed through his mind. Perhaps by some method or other he could secure a loan without the assistance of Rosabel. He would at least attempt it. Murdock was admitted.

"Good morning," said Paul, as he pointed to a chair and motioned Murdock to be seated; "what's the cause of bringing you out so early?"

"Ah, simply a matter of business. I have been to my banker's and on my way home I thought I might visit you and apologize for my somewhat unseemly conduct towards your daughter the other evening at the Bourgete reception. Believe me, I could not have been myself to have acted as I did."

"Oh, yes, I did hear something of it," answered Paul, who dared not say anything to offend the man whom he thought to be his one remaining hope.

"I was slightly under the influence of liquor and hardly knew what I did. I pray she will accept my apologies."

"Ah, I am almost sure she will," answered Paul.

Now Murdock, who was keen of thought, could not understand why Paul was so unusually willing to excuse him. Surely, thought he, there must be some reason for it all. He decided to learn, if possible, what that reason was.

"I know that you love my daughter," continued Paul, "and I dare say she has a great regard for you. I——"

"Yes, I worship her every movement," interrupted Murdock, who also worshiped the money he thought Paul possessed of.

"It is only right, then, that since you love each other, that I should stand out of the way and let you become man and wife," now said Paul, whose plan was becoming clearer and clearer to Murdock.

"Thank you, Monsieur," replied Murdock, who could scarcely repress a smile as he thought of how poorly Paul was conducting his new venture. "I dare say I will do my utmost to make your daughter happy."

"I know that, Monsieur; and now that everything, I might say, is settled," continued Paul, who would not give Murdock a chance to speak, "it is only fair that you should know my standing. Of course you know that I am one of the wealthiest men in Paris, that I am known throughout France as a man of great resources. You also know that I am

President of the De Fere Banking Institute, and as such have many enemies, who would do almost anything to bring ruin upon my head."

"Yes, yes, I know all that," ejaculated Murdock, wondering what would be the next step.

"You must also know that, being engaged to my daughter, should it become known that you deposit your money in another bank other than the one conducted by your prospective father-in-law, it would have a tendency to give people an idea that our institution is unsafe. It would make little difference to us should there be a run on the bank, but it would greatly inconvenience us and cause a great deal of unnecessary comment, which I would prefer to avoid. It would also make little difference to you where your money was deposited so long as it is well protected, while, on our score, or the score of the bank, it would avert any chances for gossip." Paul here hesitated, to see what effect his words had upon Murdock. The latter seemed to agree with him in every particular, for he said :

"That's very true, Monsieur, and I am completely at your service;" and Murdock, whose entire fortune did not now amount to more than 5000 francs, could scarcely repress a smile.

"Therefore, as to-morrow is Saturday, and a short banking day, you could easily draw a check

178 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

for the amount of your balance and deposit the same in our institute. You can easily do that, and the community will have little chance for gossip," said Paul, as he tried to make it appear merely a matter of business, while at the same time, believing Murdock the possessor of millions, he thought that could he get him to deposit a large sum in his bank this day, that the treasury might be made large enough to withstand the inevitable run. He knew the subject had been a delicate one, and one which had to be carefully gone over to avoid suspicion, but he prided himself on his apparent success.

"Yes, yes, Monsieur, I will close my account to-day and open one in your institute. I had thought of doing so before, but one thing or the other always prevented me. By the way, is Rosabel at home at present?" asked Murdock, knowing full well that she was, but asking the question for reasons of his own.

"No, no," answered Paul hurriedly, "she had some shopping to do and went out earlier than usual this morning. I will tell her that you called." Then, after a pause, "Will you call to-morrow evening?"

"Yes, with your consent," answered Murdock.

They continued their conversation for a short

time longer, and it was fully arranged that Murdock should change his bankers that very day. After a handshake, Murdock bid Paul adieu and made his exit, while the latter grasped the decanter that stood on his desk and wetted his parched lips with a glass of wine.

Murdock, having passed from the house, chuckled to himself :

“ Ha ! ha ! my fine friend, you have mistaken your man. Your bank is near its death or I am badly mistaken, but I am only lucky in knowing this fact. There must be one more meeting before we part forever. For without money you are little to me. A pretty plan you had arranged, but, ha ! ha ! what a mess of it all you made. You would marry off your daughter without her consent. Ha ! ha ! Monsieur, I had given you credit for a better head than that. Your end is near, Monsieur de Fere, your end is near.”

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BANKING INSTITUTE.

PAUL drives to the bank after the departure of Murdock and waits patiently all day for the latter's arrival. The hours pass but there are no signs of Murdock's appearance. What can be keeping him? Can he have suspected? Hardly, for he seemed only too willing to do what Paul asked him to do. Would he keep his promise after all? Oh, that he would ere it was too late. The examiners had told Paul only a few moments before that it would be necessary to have the bank suspend operations at once. Perhaps, was Murdock to deposit a large sum of money, he could secure that sum and fly the country. At least he could secure enough to live comfortably for the remainder of his natural life. But why did he not come? What could have happened? Thus Paul reasoned and pondered all day, and when at last it became dusk, he left the bank with a badly-disturbed mind. Reaching home, he waited and waited expecting that Murdock would visit him and give his reasons for not keeping his promise of the morning.

The Banking Institute. 181

He waited in vain, however, for midnight came and Murdock had failed to appear. The hours passed, and at sunrise, as the rays of the sun stole through the lattice curtains, it showed Paul sitting in his accustomed armchair in the drawing-room, sleeping the restless sleep of one whose mind is thoroughly perturbed.

Suddenly starting from his chair he remembered that this was Saturday, a day when most of the banking business was done. Then he thought of what the examiners had told him the day before about closing the bank pending an examination. He thought of Murdock; perhaps, after all, he would still keep his promise. Perhaps, after all, he would yet be able to secure enough to bring him at a safe distance from France, where he would be able to live comfortably in retirement. Perhaps Murdock would make his deposit this morning. He must get to the bank at any event and wait. Grasping the decanter he drank a large glass of wine, and without changing his linen, which was quite soiled as a result of his restless sleep, he staggered into the street and hastened in the direction of the bank.

Reaching his destination, he was admitted by the night watchman, who could not help wondering why the president of the bank should come to the bank at an hour when the working man was still in

182 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

the land of nod. It was only a little past sunrise when Paul entered the president's chamber and fell rather than seated himself in his chair and fell into a deep slumber. Time passed slowly, but the arrival of the clerks and officers told him that it was drawing near the hour for opening the bank. The arrival of the directors somewhat surprised him, for he had not been made aware that a meeting was to be held on this day ; but the fact was that the directors had all been informed, by the examiners, that the bank must be suspended, and naturally they came to see what was best to be done.

They all assembled in the directors' room, but little if anything was said and the meeting was indeed a solemn one. While the directors were in their room, Paul examined his mail. The first letter he opened made him close his eyes and fall back in his seat. He instantly discontinued the further perusal of the mail. The letter which had fallen from his hands was from the mysterious old man, and it appointed another meeting at Pierre's Resort for that evening.

Paul knew it would be little to him, after the failure of the bank, should the secret lurk out, nevertheless he placed the letter in his pocket and stared vacantly into space.

The entry of the Deputy Examiner made him start and he became ghastly pale, for he knew only

too well what was coming. He was again informed by that officer that the bank would have to remain closed until further notice. Paul knew this would prove fatal, for he was aware of the fact that papers had nightly published lengthy articles hinting at the impending danger, while on the other hand he had almost nightly declared these to be false rumors. The people, enraged by the loss of most of their savings, would not, he well knew, hesitate to do any rash act. Passing into the directors' room he informed his associates of the Deputy Examiner's decision, but they had already been informed of the state of affairs. Protests were entered to little avail, and all present determined that, having taken all the steps that were in their power, they would have to meet the disapproval of the people and make the best of it.

It was now ten o'clock. The news had spread to the employees and the outside world. A small type-written notice appeared upon the plate-glass window of the door, and as one after the other of the patrons ascended the marble steps to the front door and came face to face with the notice, which read thus :

"TAKE NOTICE, that the within Bank, the De Fere Banking Institute, will discontinue operations for the present, pending an examination by Govern-

ment Examiners," they would become visibly affected.

Some who lost little or nothing would turn to their nearest neighbor and jokingly exclaim, "I told you so;" others would frown and swear vengeance on the heads of the bank officials. Many a sad scene was now and then enacted as the notice was read by the numerous patrons of the bank. Now a tottering old man, supported by a cane, slowly mounted the stairs, and adjusting his glasses read the notice which said so little, but which hinted so much. A low moan escaped his lips and he slowly retraced his steps. His savings of a lifetime had been intrusted to the care of the bank officials. It was doubtful whether he would ever receive back a single franc.

Within the directors consulted earnestly on what was best to be done. It was true that all of them lost most of their fortunes in the failure. Some perhaps, shrewder than the rest, had taken care that they would not be entirely ruined or left without means, while others had lost their all and were even as poor as the old man who had lost the savings of a lifetime.

Suddenly, a loud report as if from a cannon, and then the sound of falling glass was heard. What could have happened? The directors, one and all, hurried to the main hall, and looked in the direction

from whence the noise had originated. They saw with one glance the cause of it all. The plate-glass door had been completely shattered by some one who had hurled a large stone through it. Without, an angry mob had collected. Loud cries could now and then be heard. The situation was becoming serious, and as the angry crowd grew bolder, now and then from the thickest of the crowd a stone would be hurled at the beautiful granite building. In the course of a quarter of an hour hardly a pane of glass had survived the attack. Something had to be done quickly, for the crowd was preparing to break down the door and demand satisfaction from the bank officials. It was decided that some one should address the crowd and inform them that the closing of the bank had only been caused by a mistake, and that in the course of a few days every one would be paid off. But who was to undertake this somewhat hazardous task? It was plainly the President's duty, and after a debate Paul decided to do it. He ascended the stairs leading to the second story, and after a slight hesitation, in which he prepared himself, he walked boldly out on the balcony which surrounded the building. He was met with an outburst of cries and hisses, and he raised his hand to quiet them. It was of little avail, however, for he was not permitted to say more than "Gentle-

men," when he was met with a volley of stones and sticks, and had to hastily retreat within to save himself from serious injury. The crowd shouted at their success, and only became bolder and bolder. They now decided that to force the door would be the next proper move. Ah, but why do they suddenly fall back? They seem to be tumbling over each other in their anxiety to get away. The police have at last arrived on the scene and are hastily dispelling the mob. The task is not an easy one, however, for they are compelled to resort to their weapons in some cases to quell some of the leaders of the disturbance. A clearing is at last made, and within a hundred feet of the bank no one is permitted to loiter. The crowd seems bent on not being entirely dispersed, and they lurk on the side streets, and in small groups talk of the concocted swindle, as they are pleased to call it. The directors, who are badly frightened, remain huddled together in the directors' room the entire day, fearing the violence of the crowd, should they dare venture out. The papers contain long accounts of the suspension of the bank, and large crowds of people are drawn to the scene, many merely by curiosity. At night-fall, the crowd is at its height. Paul decided at last that he would go home, no matter what the cost. He telephoned to his residence ordering

his carriage, and at the end of a half hour he had the satisfaction of seeing it driven into the space kept clear by the police, and halt at the bank entrance. The mob, which had become quite moderate in its anger, became as violent as before at the sight of the President's carriage. Paul hurried down the stairs and entered the coach. At the same time a loud mumbling sound reached his ears. He became aware of the fact that the crowd was not pleased at the idea that he was about to leave the bank. With a crack of the whip, the team dashed forward amid the crowd. Stones were hurled at the driver and the vehicle, and the windows were broken. Paul, huddled up in one corner of the coach, was almost terrified out of his wits. Often he was struck by the stones that were hurled into the coach. The coachman, by continually whipping the horses, managed to get clear of the crowd, and soon they reached the De Fere mansion. Paul staggered up the stairs to his drawing-room and sank into a chair, thoroughly exhausted.

It is almost needless to say that all of the directors received about the same treatment at the hands of the mob as Paul did, as they, one after the other, followed his example in leaving the building.

At midnight order had been restored, and no semblance of the disturbance or crowd could be discerned.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEW DISCOVERIES.

It was pitch dark within Paul's drawing-room. He had not yet lighted the lamp. He was undergoing the tortures of a troubled mind. He was ruined. The end which he had been successfully staving off for so long a time had come at last. People whom he thought to be his best friends were the first to turn from him in his trouble, and denounce him as a swindler. What was it all to him now? He had nothing to live for. He thought of the letter in his pocket from the old man. Should he attend the meeting and inform his blackmailing friend that it would be useless to continue their association longer, since he was utterly without funds? What would be the good in doing that? Surely, by this time, the old gentleman must have heard of the failure, and would know that all connections were severed. Then he thought, perhaps, should he neglect being at the appointed place, that after all the old man would tell what he knew. Then this new story, coupled with the bank failure, might be the means of so enraging the people that they might

seize him and subject him to horrible atrocities. Suicide? Ah, yes, 'tis an excellent subject for debate. He dared not take his own life, for he feared the punishment that awaited him in the next world. No, he would live, and defy his persecutors. He would attend the meeting, and perhaps, after all, arrangements could be made with his old friend that would prove satisfactory. Who was this strange old man? He had failed to even learn his name during their long business connection. He would learn his name to-night, and hear the whole story from beginning to end. His thoughts now reverted to Murdock.

What of him? Wise man he had been. Perhaps he was now congratulating himself on his having neglected to deposit the money in Paul's bank. He probably knew that it had all been a plot to defraud him of his wealth. Murdock now knew why Paul had been so anxious to have him marry Rosabel. A smile crossed Paul's face, as he thought how little right he had to even talk to Rosabel. She would soon have to know all.

What was that! Ah, yes, merely the striking of the clock. Then it is already eight o'clock. The meeting is to take place at nine. He would have to start at once to be on time. He hesitated about going. Should he go? It probably would do no

farm. His dread of the story becoming known conquered and he immediately set off.

Pierre's supper is well patronized this night, Saturday being the night when the miller, having received his weekly wages, indulges in his delight, and often staggers home to his poorly fed and wretchedly clothed family without one single franc remaining of all that he has earned. Boisterous laughing and jesting is going on within when at nine o'clock the old man enters the place, but, contrary to precedent, Monsieur de Fere had not yet arrived. The old man became restless after he had waited a while and muttered, "Perhaps after all he will not come. Perhaps he has learned the truth. Had he known or suspected the truth ere this, I dare say I would not have extracted a franc from him."

The door now suddenly opened and a figure entirely clothed in black entered. Even his face was obscured from view. It was Monsieur Paul de Fere.

The old man arose and led the way to the closed compartment. Paul followed. The old man was not possessed with the sang-froid he had displayed on the former occasions, for he seemed nervous, and after securing the door he began,

"Now, sir, to business. First I would say, that I have heard of the failure of your bank."

"That is well," calmly answered Paul, "for it saves me the trouble of telling you of the unfortunate circumstance."

"You seem to talk as if you thought this was to put an end to our association," replied the old man in sneering tones.

"I not only think so, but I am certain it will," hotly retorted Paul in loud accents.

"Well, well, I am only surprised that you should care to have the Notre Dame Murder placed on your shoulders while you are so hated by the people of Paris for your fiasco of to-day."

"It would make little difference to me," said Paul as he bowed his head, "for I have hardly a five-franc piece to my name."

"That's well spoken, but I know you too well to believe that you did not benefit by the failure. I wager, you quite doubled your fortune by the affair."

"Then you have a peculiar way of thinking; but even were it true as you say, not one franc would I pay you to keep your miserable silence."

Paul, who was beside himself with rage, decided to face the worst, and he now stood erect, his eyes flashing and staring into the old man's face.

192 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

“Then you desire me to inform the authorities?” asked the old gentleman, making towards the door.

“Yes, if you think best,” answered Paul in a threatening manner, as he turned toward the old gentleman and made a step forward.

Murdock, for we must remember that the old gentleman was none other, wondered at the bravado of Paul. He dared not inform the police, for he knew he would only jeopardize himself. He determined, however, to frighten Paul and bring him to terms. He therefore unlocked the door and was just about to pass out when Paul, who could no longer restrain himself, dashed at the supposed old man and grasped him by the throat.

A terrific struggle was soon in progress, and Paul, possessed with demon's strength, seemed to be getting the better of the combat.

Suddenly the false beard of the old man became deranged in some manner and fell to the floor.

“Good God!” escaped from the lips of Paul as he beheld the face of Murdock Montague.

For a moment they stood still, staring at each other, then the sudden shock was too much for Paul's nerves and he staggered back against the partition and sank to the floor. Murdock, discovered, hurried off fearing that Paul might have learned the truth. Paul lay moaning for some time, this last shock

having almost robbed him of the little life he still possessed, then staggering from the room he reached the street and in some manner at last reached home. He was heart-broken. His friend Murdock Montague had been leading a double life and making his great display of wealth on the money which he had extracted from him in the guise of the mysterious old man.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A WEEK LATER.

NEARLY a week has passed. Paul has not left his drawing-room since his return home the night of the discovery at Pierre's Resort. He has changed greatly since that memorable night. His brow is wrinkled : his eyes have a dull glare ; his face is without color and his hair has turned from a silvery gray to snow-white. He has partaken of little food and is fairly wasting away. Rosabel has been a constant attendant, and several times he has determined to tell her all, but the thought of seeing her turn from him always makes him reconsider his determination, and as a result she has as yet learned nothing.

He has decided to write a full account of his life, to be read only after his death, and to that end he has been writing industriously whenever the opportunity presented itself.

To-day, feeling weaker than usual, he has bolted the door, refusing entrance to any one. He knows that to complete his task he must work with the ut-

most energy before it is too late. Several times to-day Rosabel has knocked on the door and asked to be admitted, but he has refused her request each time. Now and then he pauses in his writing and takes from the drawer of his desk a small black bottle and puts some of its contents into a small, sharp, syringe-looking instrument. Then baring his right arm, he pricks it with the sharp point of the instrument and falls back into his chair with a sigh. His arm, we observe as it is bared to view, is marked in nearly a half hundred places with the tiny black mark, which denotes only too plainly that morphine has been used. Ah, then, Monsieur Paul de Fere, the man of iron nerve, has been compelled to resort to morphine to soothe his terrible agonies.

A few moments later he is again himself, and covering his arm he is soon fast at work again. Now and then he stops and falls back in his chair, gasping. He is now very weak. It is, as Murdock Montague intimated, "near the end."

The majestic-appearing Monsieur Paul de Fere of but so few short years ago is now a complete physical wreck. The strain upon his nervous system has been enormous. It has at last become weakened by the constant worry, and now, like the works of a fine Swiss watch which has been wound

196 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

up too tightly, it is completely shattered. His nervous system, unlike the watch, however, cannot be repaired by human hands.

Night draws near, and he completes the writing which has occupied his attention so closely for the past week. While it is yet light he decides to read it over. He goes over page after page, and when at last he completes his task a deep sigh shows his intense relief. Paul has not entirely given up hope, for even in his present weakened condition he is making plans for the future, should ever he recover from his present illness. He decides that should he become stronger he will say good-by to France and travel to Australia and begin life anew.

He goes over his whole life. He thinks of the chances he had. How he failed to accept many. How one fatal step was the cause of his downfall. Oh, had he but his life to live over again.

A loud knock on the door now aroused him.

"Who's there?" asked he in a horrible tone, as the perspiration stood out on his forehead.

"It's only me, father," answered a voice which we readily recognize as Rosabel's. "I have strange news for you. The Notre Dame murderer has been discovered and——"

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Paul as he started from the chair. "She knows all, she knows all."

"Why, what ails you, father?" asked Rosabel, who shuddered as she heard her father's voice. "Are you ill?" Then after a pause, "Do let me in, father."

"No, no," muttered Paul, scarcely knowing what he said. He staggered to his feet and turned toward the door, than halting for a moment he staggered back to his desk and sank into his seat again.

He rested for a moment in his chair, his breathing being that of a man thoroughly exhausted. His eyes were now bloodshot and he had scarcely the strength left to raise a hand.

"Oh, father, tell me what ails you! Shall I send for the physician?" asked Rosabel, as she heard his deep breathing and heard him stagger around in the drawing-room. Receiving no reply, she knocked on the door, at the same time bursting into tears.

"Oh, father, shall I send for a physician?" she again asked, her voice quivering as she tried to restrain her tears.

"Yes, yes," faintly whispered he. Then suddenly, as an impulse seized him, he sat up and stared around the room. Seizing a pen he signed his name to the last page of the writing which lay before him, then slowly muttered :

198 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

"They know all, they know all." He now burst into a fit of violent coughing. "Ah, but they will never, never punish me for it."

Rosabel, who had not heard her father answer yes to her inquiry whether to send for a physician, renewed her knocking on the door with more vigor, and between her sobs asked to be admitted.

"No, they will never punish me," continued Paul, his eyes almost bulging from his head. Then in softer tones : "No, no, not I, not Paul de Fere."

Suddenly he started from his chair and gave an awful shriek and, exclaimed, "No, not I. Langford, not I. It was not I, no, no." He became calmer and smiled faintly. Slowly opening the drawer of his desk, he drew forth the black bottle which we have already seen and fondled it in his ghastly white hands.

"Father, father, oh please tell me what is the trouble," pleaded Rosabel without.

"Father, ha ! ha ! father," Paul mockingly exclaimed, bursting into a maniacal laugh. "No, no ; they shall never take me alive."

A moment later, after having slowly removed the cork of the small black bottle, he drained its contents. At once his face assumed a horrible aspect and the hands tightened around his waist. With one cry he started up from his seat and staggered across the

room in a half-crouching position. His hands clutched involuntarily at the furniture, and once having secured a grasp on the lambrequin on the mantelpiece he pulled it off, bringing the costly and magnificent vases and other bric-a-brac to the floor with a crash. Shriek after shriek now reechoed throughout the room. Rosabel was almost prostrated, and being unable to stand it any longer, she hurried below to summon assistance.

Paul had fallen to his knees and was crawling around the room on hands and knees. Suddenly he stood erect, and with one horrible cry he made two or three steps forward toward the door. As he felt himself falling he grasped wildly at an easel which supported a large, beautiful picture, but this was too frail to uphold his weight, and with a loud, dull sound he fell face downward upon the marble floor.

Meanwhile Rosabel had informed two of the servants that something was wrong with her father. They hurried to the door of the drawing-room. It was locked, as when Rosabel hurried below. They knocked quietly at first, but receiving no reply they increased their knocking. "Perhaps Monsieur was now sleeping," one ventured to say. But no, Rosabel knew better. She feared the worst. They renewed their efforts, and receiving no answer, they

200 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

decided to force open the door. Placing their shoulders against the door, with one mighty effort, the door swung open. Within all was darkness. One of the servants hurried to light the lamp. When lit a horrible sight met their gaze. The room was in utter confusion. Papers were scattered all over the room ; broken china was strewn over the floor ; here and there chairs were overturned, and in the farthest corner of the room lay the body of Monsieur Paul de Fere. With a loud cry Rosabel sprang to his side, but it was too late ; he was past all aid ; Monsieur Paul de Fere was dead.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TRUTH AT LAST.

AN account of the tragic death of Monsieur de Fere appeared in all the papers next day. It is needless to say that it caused a sensation. Rosabel was almost heart-broken after her awful discovery, but her sorrow was almost turned to hatred when she learned the full history of Paul's life, an account of which was found on his desk soon after the finding of his body. She could scarcely believe it to be the truth.

The history, or rather the confession, which Paul wrote the last week of his life, was in substance as follows :

"When this is read I will have gone from this world. Mine has been a varied life. In fact, from childhood I have lived on the profits of my crimes. Had I accepted the chances that were mine when still a youth I might now have been an honorable citizen of London. I am not of French birth, as Paris generally believes. My real name is not De Fere ; but my whole life's story must be told to intelligently understand all. I was born in England,

202 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

in a suburb near London. The family name was Barrymore and I was baptized Hilton. My parents were wealthy. My childhood was spent in London. Ah, when I think of the pleasant hours I then spent, my heart is wrought with anguish. My parents died when I was sixteen, and the entire estate was to be given to me when I arrived at the age of twenty-five years. It was stipulated in my father's will that I was to have a college education. I accordingly attended college, but the years passed only too slowly for a young man who was to receive, I might say, a fortune. Being associated with the sons of some of the wealthiest men in England, who seemed to care little for money, I naturally soon learned to be as reckless as themselves. While at college I received my first lesson in gambling, and a desire soon overwhelmed me to double and triple my weekly allowance by this method. At the first game I played I remember that I was very lucky, and more than doubled my allowance. Lucky, I say! Ah, that I had lost all of my weekly allowance at that first game; I dare say that I would not now be writing this confession of my many crimes. I arrived at the age of twenty-five and was given the estate that my father had devised to me. For two or three years I was industrious and the estate thrived. I was accepted in

society, and I say without any vanity that in such circles I was quite a favorite. At twenty-eight I first met her who was one of the causes of my downfall, Rosabel Gray. Ah, I can well remember her now, though it is nearly thirty years ago, for she was indeed beautiful. That face, that figure. Oh, God ! had I never met her. Ah, but perhaps after all it was my fate. We fell in love. Her parents objected and she soon forgot me. I was told that she was to marry an English nobleman, Lord Desbrow. I, like many a foolish man has done before and will do after me, cared little for life. I gambled. Yes, and lost thousands at one sitting. They married, Lord Desbrow and Rosabel, and were, I presume, happy. Two years passed, a child was born, and she was called after the mother, Rosabel. The mother died soon after, and I seemed almost glad that he had been robbed of her he had taken from me. It seems strange, but Lord Desbrow and I became fast friends. He placed the child in a private nursery, where it received the best of care. I continued my gambling. This was my sole occupation soon, for my estate, horses, money, and everything dwindled away to a mere nothing. I had hardly a hundred pounds left. Though we seemed friends, I personally hated Lord Desbrow. One night I heard that he had

much money in his possession and the demon's thought of stealing it at once took hold of me. Returning to the room, after I had pretended leaving for the night, I emptied his strong box of its contents. It contained thousands. Lord Desbrow surprised me at my work. Oh, how terrible it all seems now, and I shudder as I see the scene before me. In a rage I struck him down and escaped unobserved, as I supposed, but I had been mistaken. I soon afterwards learned that one Langford, a butler in Lord Desbrow's employ, had seen me commit my terrible crime.

"I escaped to Northern France and worked on the vineyards there as a farm hand. I dared not make any display of wealth as yet, for fear of the authorities. I carried my wealth in a belt around my waist night and day, and would have fought for it with my life had any one attempted to wrest it from me. My name now was Joyeaux. But working in this fashion when I was the possessor of nearly 30,000 English pounds did not satisfy me. I remained here for nearly a year and then traveled to Paris. I had grown a beard, and during my stay on the vineyards had learned much of the French habits and language, which, coupled with that I learned at college, made me quite an adept of the French tongue. Arriving in Paris, I took the name

of De Fere, Paul de Fere. I had no idea of remaining here long, having planned to travel all over the world. I rented a small house in one of the principal streets, however, and became acquainted with one Antoine Gasgoine, who was cashier in one of the leading banks of Paris, who was possessed of only moderate means. In a short time I was introduced by him to some of the leading bankers of Paris. I began to think that it would be best were I to remain here. I was becoming acquainted. Perhaps I could invest my money in some legitimate business and settle down without ever becoming discovered. Everything was going better than I could ever have expected. A year was thus passed in Paris when I first broached the subject to Monsieur Gasgoine of organizing a banking institution. He readily agreed to give all the aid at his command. About ten of the wealthiest merchants and bankers of Paris were through his influence brought together for the purpose of organizing the bank. Each one placed a sum nearly equal to my share in the bank. The result was that the institution had a capital of about five million francs. It was decided to name the bank after its founder. For his aid, we employed Monsieur Gasgoine as cashier. At once the bank became prosperous. We made money. Then came a stumbling block to thwart my happiness. Lang-

206 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

ford, Lord Desbrow's former butler, entered my office one day and demanded hush money. I was thunder-struck, for I had believed that no one had been a witness to my crime. I had been mistaken, for he knew all. I had to pay him, for since my ill-gained money was invested I could not escape. He told me he had been tracing me up for nearly three years. Then he told me that, could I secure Lord Desbrow's child, perhaps a fortune might be secured for the Desbrow estate, which was all to go to her when she arrived at the age of twenty-one. His plan was that, having secured her, I should raise her in the best manner, then when she arrived of age to have her claim the estate. The matter of getting what we wanted of it from her would, he said, be quite an easy task. I thought it would be impossible to do this, as it involved too much risk, but as he pressed me I consented to act with him, for I greatly feared him. He went away and was gone for about two months, until one rainy night he called at my house—it was this very house, which I had just had built—and brought me the child, which was, I should judge, about three and a half years of age. I cursed him for his folly in bringing me the child, for after he had departed after making the proposition two months ago, I had come to the conclusion, after considerable thought,

that it would be impossible to secure the estate and that his plan was almost ridiculous. What could I tell my associates? They would want to know how I came by the child. I now determined, however, to keep her, and I subsequently informed my friends that this was my child, by my dead wife, who had been brought up at a nursery in Southern France. Every one who saw her admired the little tot and I became proud of her. Mine was then too good a life for one who had committed murder, but things were soon to take a change. A short time after I had received the child, Rosabel—for she is none other than Rosabel de Fere accepted by all as my daughter—Monsieur Gasgoine died, and Victor his son, a lad of sixteen, was engaged by the bank officers, more in respect of his father than for any other reason. Years passed. Langford, though he knew the horrible secret, I must say was very lenient in his demands. He got into fast company, however, and soon began to gamble and press me harder and harder for money. He also began to drink heavily, and often words would escape his lips which I feared might lead to my ultimate discovery. Then business reverses came. The bank began to lose money steadily. This brings me to about a year ago, twenty years after the Desbrow affair. I shudder as I think of writing the events that followed.

208 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

Langford met me almost nightly, making demands, and I determined at last not to pay him any more. One night he called at the house, this very house, and taunted me. I grew infuriated. Having once committed murder it is not so terrible to repeat the crime. I stabbed him in the breast, slightly, I thought and so did he, for we made up and he departed without any sign of being badly hurt. Oh, God! the next morning he was found dead near Notre Dame Cathedral. I had committed my second murder. I could not understand why he was found with two stab wounds when I was almost positive that I had only inflicted one, and that a slight one. However, in my rage I hardly knew what I did, and perhaps I struck him twice. I could not forget this crime. It nearly crazed me. Then after a short space I began to be hounded by one who had learned the whole account of the Desbrow affair. I supposed him at first to be an old gentleman or else a friend of Langford's, but I learned only to my sorrow that it was none other than one Murdock Montague. Oh, God! had I him but here for a few moments that we might meet face to face, doubtless I would again commit murder. He pressed me for money, I have said, in the guise of an old man. My money was slowly slipping away, and the bank's funds were also decreasing, through

losses in speculation and through my thefts, for I must confess that I stole enormous sums. The examiners, in making an examination, began to suspect the thieving, and to save myself I changed several of the books and then accused the son of my first friend in Paris and the lover of Rosabel, Victor Gasgoine.

"I, being respected, and the president of the bank, was of course not suspected, and it was a small matter to have Victor discharged on my accusation. Ah, it seems that the more crimes I committed the more I had to perform. My life's tale, filled with crime as it is, is nearly finished. Rosabel de Fere is the daughter of Lord Hugh Desbrow, of London, and as such is entitled to his vast estate. Victor Gasgoine is entirely innocent of the crime for which he has suffered much. My one hope is that they will be able to make up for the sorrows they have endured on my account. Had I never gambled, I dare say I would to-day be respected, but one crime leads to another, and the last one, in my case, will lead to death at my own hand. The agonies I have endured in the past two years should have driven me insane, but it seems that I was to stand punishment in this world as well as in the next. God only knows what awaits me there, but I ask no mercy. I only hope

210 Monsieur Paul de Fere.

that there will not be others who will mistake the paths, and, like me, wander into the wrong, farther and farther away from the righteous one. When this is read I will be no longer in the land of the living. Again I ask no forgiveness, for I have earned and should receive my just punishment.

“HILTON BARRYMORE,

“alias Paul de Fere.”

.

It was learned a short time afterwards that Rosabel, when she had first notified Paul that the Notre Dame murderer had been discovered, had just been handed a newspaper by one of the servants from which she had learned the following news, which had produced such an effect upon Paul.

The paper stated in large, glaring type that a man, while attempting to board a moving train near the suburbs of Paris, had fallen beneath the cars and had his legs badly mangled. The doctors having told the man that there was little hope, the latter had immediately desired to make a statement. His statement in substance was that he was the person who had murdered the man found near Notre Dame Cathedral, and that he had committed the crime to secure the money which he knew the murdered man to be possessed of.

.

FINIS.

Five years have passed. A visitor to London, should he be desirous of visiting the Desbrow estate, will find the same one of the most beautiful and best taken care of in the vicinity. The mansion has been remodeled and is completely refurnished, while the surrounding garden is a scene of beauty to the eye. It is inhabited by Monsieur Victor Gasgoine and wife, Rosabel, and their two children. It is needless to say that quite some gossip was revived in London when the story of Paul de Fere's life became known, and not a few of the habitues of John Grunty's Tavern will recall, should you ask them, that they knew how it would all come about.



TWENTIETH EDITION.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

May be obtained through any bookseller,
or will be mailed postpaid, on receipt of the
published price.

- A DESCRIPTIVE AND ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED LIST OF MINERALS, PRECIOUS AND OTHER STONES.** By Felix J. Troughton. Twenty-five Cents.
- ADVERTISING AGENTS' DIRECTORY, THE.** Cloth. One Dollar. (In preparation.)
- AFLOAT WITH OLD GLORY.** By H. V. Warren. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- AMERICAN ELOQUENCE. A Selection of Orations.** By Carlos Martyn. (In preparation.)
- AMERICAN WOMEN OF THE TIME.** Revised to date and edited by Mr. Charles F. Rideal, Mrs. John King Van Benschelaer and Dr. Carlos Martyn. Cloth. \$7.50. (In preparation.)
- ARICKAREE TREASURE, THE.** By Albert G. Clarke, Jr. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- AT THE TEMPLE GATES.** By Stewart Doubleday. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- AUNT LUCY'S CABIN.** By June Kankakee. Cloth. Daintily produced. Fifty Cents.
- BALLADS OF BROTHERHOOD.** By Alphonso Alva Hopkins. Cloth, small 12mo, 84 pages. Fifty Cents.
- BEAUTIFUL HAND OF THE DEVIL, THE.** By Margaret Hobson. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- BIRDS UNCAGED AND OTHER POEMS.** By Burton L. Collins. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- BITS OF SUNSHINE.** By Clarence L. Miller. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- BOBTAIL DIXIE.** By Abbie N. Smith. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. One Dollar.
- BOOK PUBLISHERS' DIRECTORY, THE.** Cloth. One Dollar. (In preparation.)
- BRITANNIA; OR, THE WHITE QUEEN.** By the Rev. South G. Preston. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- BY THEIR FRUITS.** By Edith M. Nicholl. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- CANDLE LIGHT, A, AND OTHER POEMS.** By Louis Smirnow. Illustrated. Cloth. One Dollar.
- CAT TALES IN VERSE.** By Elliott Walker. Cloth, with cover designed by C. H. Rowe. Fifty Cents.
- CAVALIER POETS.** By Clarence M. Lindsay. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- CHARLES DICKENS' HEROINES AND WOMEN FOLK.** By Charles F. Rideal. With two drawings by Florence Pash. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- CHIEFS OF CAMBELA, THE.** By Morgan P. Jones. Cloth, 12mo, \$1.25.
- CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND KINDRED SUPERSTITIONS.** By the Rev. Charles F. Winbigler. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.

ABBEE PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES.** By William M. Campbell. Cloth, 12mo, 170 pages. One Dollar.
- CITY BOYS' LIFE IN THE COUNTRY; OR, HOWARD AND WESTON AT BEDFORD.** By Clinton Osgood Burling. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. One Dollar.
- COALS OF FIRE.** By M. Frances Hanford Delano. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- CONCHITA'S ANGELS.** By Agnes Camplejohn Pritchard. Cloth, 12mo, 216 pages. One Dollar.
- CONSPIRACY OF YESTERDAY, A.** By Mical Uí Niall. Cloth, 12mo, daintily produced, 75 pages. Fifty Cents.
- CONTINENTAL CAVALIER, A.** By Kimball Scribner. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated, 258 pages. One Dollar.
- CORDELIA AND OTHER POEMS.** By N. B. Ripley. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- COUNCIL OF THREE, THE.** By Charles A. Seltzer. Cloth, 12mo, 177 pages. One Dollar.
- COUNTRY STORE WINDOW, A.** By Herbert Holmes. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- CRICKET ON THE HEARTH, THE.** By Charles Dickens. Fully illustrated. Dainty edition. 12mo. One Dollar.
- CRIME OF CHRISTENDOM, THE.** By Daniel Seelye Gregory, L.D., LL.D. Cloth, 12mo, 330 pages. \$1.50.
- CROSS OF HONOR, THE.** By Charles F. Rideal and C. Gordon Winter. Second Edition. One Dollar.
- CULTURE FROM READING.** A book for everybody. By Albert R. Alexander. Twenty-five Cents.
- CUPID IN GRANDMA'S GARDEN.** By Mrs. David O. Paige. Illustrated. Fifty Cents.
- CURIOUS CASE OF GENERAL DELANEY SMYTHE, THE.** By W. H. Gardner, Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. A. (retired). Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated, 204 pages. One Dollar.
- DANGER SIGNALS FOR NEW CENTURY MANHOOD.** By Edward A. Tabor. 12mo, cloth bound, 316 pages. One Dollar.
- DAUGHTER OF THE PROPHETS, A.** By Curtis Van Dyke. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE, THE.** By Elizabeth Bryant Johnston. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- DEFEATED, BUT VICTOR STILL.** By William V. Lawrence. Cloth, 12mo, 424 pages. One Dollar.
- DEMOCRACY AND THE TRUSTS.** By Edwin B. Jennings. Cloth, 65 pages. Fifty Cents.
- DEVIL'S DIARY, THE.** By Louis M. Elshemus. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar. Paper, Fifty Cents.
- DEVOUT BLUEBEARD, A.** By Marie Graham. Cloth, 12mo, 300 pages. One Dollar.
- DIABOLICAL IN SCRIPTURE AND IN HUMAN LIFE, THE.** By Harold Stormbrow, D.D., LL.D. Cloth, 8vo, limited edition. Ten Dollars. (In preparation.)
- DID SHE FAIL?** By Anna Fielding. Cloth, small 12mo, neatly bound. Fifty Cents.
- DIP IN THE POOL, A.—(Bethesda.)** By Barnetta Brown. Cloth (Miniature), daintily produced. Twenty-five Cents.
- DIRECTORY OF MEDICAL WOMEN, THE.** Cloth. \$1.50. (In preparation.)
- DOCTOR JOSEPHINE.** By Willis Barnes. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- DOCTRINES OF THE BOOK OF ACTS, THE.** By G. L. Young. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.

ABBEE PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- DOLINDA AND THE TWINS.** By Dora Harvey Munyon, A.M. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. Seventy-five Cents.
- DOOMED TURK, THE; OR, THE END OF THE EASTERN QUESTION.** By E. Middleton. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- EGYPTIAN RING, THE.** By Nellie Tolman Sawyer. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- EVERYDAY CHILDREN.** By May C. Emmel. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- EXPERIENCE. "How to Take It: How to Make It."** By Baretta Brown. Cloth (Miniature), daintily produced. Twenty-five Cents.
- FEATHER'S WEIGHT, A.** By Amarala Martin. Cloth, small 12mo, 131 pages. Fifty Cents.
- FIGHTING AGAINST FATE.** By Moses D. Morris. Cloth, 12mo, 275 pages, with one hundred illustrations. One Dollar.
- FLOWER OF THE TROPICS, A, AND OTHER STORIES OF MEXICO AND THE BORDER.** By Warner F. Sutton. Cloth, 12mo, 121 pages, daintily printed and bound. One Dollar.
- FOOTSTEPS OF TRUTH.** By I. M. Morris. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- FOUNDATION RITES.** By Lewis Dayton Burdick. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.50.
- FRENCH-ENGLISH AND ENGLISH-FRENCH PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY** on the basis of Nugent, with many new words in general use exhibiting the pronunciation of all French words in pure English sounds, and giving the parts of speech, and gender of French nouns. By a member of the University of Paris. Cloth, 734 pages. One Dollar.
- FROM CLOUDS TO SUNSHINE; OR, THE EVOLUTION OF A SOUL.** By E. Thomas Kaven. Cloth, 12mo, 182 pages. One Dollar.
- FROM THE FOUR WINDS.** By Warren B. Hutchinson. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- GLEANINGS FROM NATURE.** By Eva M. Carter. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. One Dollar.
- GLOBE MUTINY, THE.** By William Lay, of Saybrook, Conn., and Cyrus M. Hussey, of Nantucket. Cloth, 12mo, 163 pages. Seventy-five Cents.
- "GOD AND THE CITY."** By the Right Reverend Henry C. Potter, Bishop of New York. Paper, Ten Cents. A daintily printed, cloth bound edition, Twenty-five Cents.
- GREAT BREAD TRUST, THE.** By W. H. Wright. Cloth, Miniature Series, 54 pages. Fifty Cents.
- GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD, THE.** By Henry Drummond. Cloth, with photograph and biographical sketch of the author. Fifty Cents.
- GREEN VALLEY.** By T. P. Buffington. Cloth, 12mo, 151 pages. One Dollar.
- GUMBO LILY, A.** By Stella Gilman. Handsome Cloth, 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- HALF HOUR STORIES.** By Dora Harvey Munyon, A.M. Cloth, 12mo, 148 pages. One Dollar.
- HALLIE MARSHALL. A True Daughter of the South.** By F. P. Williams. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- HANDFUL OF RHYMES, A.** By Lischen M. Miller. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.50.
- HEALTH AND HYGIENE FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.** By John Joseph Nutt. Cloth, Fifty Cents; paper, Twenty-five Cents.

ABBEE PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- HEART'S DESIRE, THE.** "The Moth for the Star; The Night for the Morrow." By Barnetta Brown. Cloth (Miniature), daintily produced. Twenty-five Cents.
- HEROINE OF SANTIAGO, THE; OR, WHAT FOLLOWED THE SINKING OF THE MERRIMAC.** (A sequel.) By Antoinette Sheppard. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, WOMAN.** By Max O'Reh. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- HOCH DER KAISER.** *Myself und Gott.* By A. McGregor Rose (A. M. R. Gordon). Fully illustrated by Jessie A. Walker. Second Edition. Cloth, 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- HOUSE OF A TRAITOR, THE.** By Prosper Merrimée. With photograph and biographical sketch of the author. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- HOW TO ENJOY MATRIMONY; OR, THE MONOGAMIC MARRIAGE LAW AMENDED BY TRIAL-EXPIRATION CLAUSE.** By Rose Marie. Cloth. Twenty-five Cents.
- HOW TOMMY WAS CURED OF CRYING.** By Gertrude Mitchell Waite. Cloth, fully illustrated and daintily produced. Fifty Cents.
- IN LOVE AND TRUTH.** The Downfall of Samuel Seale, Healer. By Anita M. Muñoz. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- INTELLECTUAL PEOPLE.** By William Adolphus Clark. Fourth Edition. Cloth, small 12mo, 97 pages. Fifty Cents.
- INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF AUTHORS, THE.** With a full list of their works, dates of publication, etc. Compiled and edited by Charles F. Rideal and Carlos Martyn. Cloth. \$7.50. (In preparation.)
- IRON HAND, THE.** By Howard Dean. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. One Dollar.
- ITURBIDE, A SOLDIER OF MEXICO.** By John Lewin McLeish. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. One Dollar.
- JEWELS OF PASTE.** By Sue Edwards. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- JONAS BRAND; OR, LIVING WITHIN THE LAW.** By Jane Valentine. Cloth, 12mo, 263 pages. One Dollar.
- KEY-WORDS AND PHRASES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.** By the Rev. South G. Preston. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- LADY OF MARK, THE.** A Story of Frontier Experiences. By Sidney C. Kendall. Cloth, Fifty Cents.
- LADY VERE.** By L. M. Elshemus. Cloth, small 12mo, 126 pages. One Dollar.
- LIFE'S SPRINGTIME.** By J. N. Fradenburgh. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- LIKE THE LILIES.** By Lucy Tracy. Daintily Produced. Twenty-five Cents.
- LIQUID FROM THE SUN'S RAYS.** By Sue Greenleaf. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.50.
- LITERARY LIFE.** (A monthly Illustrated Magazine.) Five Cents per copy or Fifty Cents per annum, mailed free.
- LITTLE COURT OF YESTERDAY, A.** By Minnie Reid French. Cloth, 12mo, 232 pages. One Dollar.
- LITTLE CRUSADERS, THE.** By Isabel Scott Stone. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- LITTLE SCARECROW, THE.** By Maurus Jokai. Cloth. Fifty Cents.

ABBEE PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- LODGING IN THE NIGHT, A.** By Robert Louis Stevenson. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- LOST LOUISIANA, THE.** By J. Kellogg. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- LOVE AND FALSE.** By R. Rosino Napoliello. Cloth, 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- LOVE'S RANDOM SHOT.** By Wilkie Collins. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- MAGISTRACY, THE.** Being a Directory and Biographical Dictionary of the Justices of the Peace of the United States. Compiled and edited by Charles F. Rideal and Carlos Martyn. (In preparation.)
- MAN WITHOUT THE OATH, THE.** By Olive C. Tobey. Cloth, 12mo, fully illustrated. One Dollar.
- MASTER AND MAN.** By Count Tolstoy. With photograph and biographical sketch of the author. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- MEN, WOMEN, AND LOVING.** By Barnetta Brown. Cloth (Miniature), daintily produced. Twenty-five Cents.
- MISS PENELOPE'S ELOPEMENT, AND OTHER STORIES.** By Katherine Miles Cary. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- MISTAKES OF AUTHORS, THE.** By Will M. Clemens. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- MISTRESS OF MANY MOODS, A.** Translated by Charlotte Boardman Rogers. Cloth, 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- MUSICAL REFORMATION, A.** By John A. Cone. Twenty-five Cents.
- MYSTERY OF THE MARBLETONS, THE. A Romance of Reality.** By M. Mackin. Cloth, 12mo. Fifty Cents. Small 12mo. Twenty-five Cents.
- NARRAGANSETT PEER, THE.** By George Appleton. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- NEW DON QUIXOTE, THE.** By Mary Pacheco. Cover design by C. H. Rowe. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- NEW ENGLAND FOLK.** By Mrs. C. Richmond Duxbury. Cloth, 12mo, 295 pages. One Dollar.
- NEW SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, THE.** By Helen Pomeroy. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- NEW THEORY OF EVOLUTION, A.** By Alfred Ward Smith. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.25.
- NEW VERSION OF AN OLD STORY, A.** By Elizabeth Milroy. One Dollar.
- N'TH FOOT IN WAR, THE.** By Lieut. M. B. Stewart, U. S. Army. Cloth, 12mo. Attractively designed cover. One Dollar.
- OCTAVIA, THE OCTOROON A Southern Story.** By J. F. Lee, M.D. Cloth, Fifty Cents.
- OLD GLORY.** By Lulu K. Eubank. Cloth, 12mo. Very fine. One Dollar.
- ODD JEWEL, AN.** A Postnuptial Tale of a World-wide Passion. By Warren M. Macleod. Cloth, small 12mo, 159 pages. Fifty Cents.
- OLD GRAHAM PLACE, THE.** By Etta M. Gardner. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- OLD SCHOOL DAYS.** By Andrew J. Miller. Cloth, 12mo, 248 pages. One Dollar.
- ONE THOUSAND WAYS TO MAKE MONEY.** By Page Fox. Cloth, 12mo, 331 pages. One Dollar.
- ON THE CHARLESTON.** A Tale of the Taking of Guam. By Irene Widdemer Hartt. Cloth, 12mo, 289 pages. One Dollar.

ABBEE PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- ON THE THRESHOLD. A Hillside Sketch.** By Mary A. Hartsborn. Cloth. Twenty-five Cents.
- JUR CHOIR.** By George A. Stockwell. Cloth, 12mo, 83 pages. Fifty Cents.
- DUR NEAR NEIGHBOR, THE MOSQUITO.** By A. B. Rich, D.D. Illustrated. Twenty-five Cents.
- PACIFIC COAST VACATION, A.** By Mrs. James Edwin Morris. Cloth, 12mo, beautifully illustrated. \$1.50.
- PAIR OF KNAVES AND A FEW TRUMPS, A.** By M. Douglas Flattery. Cloth, 12mo, fully illustrated, 810 pages. One Dollar.
- PEOPLE AND PROPERTY.** By Edwin B. Jennings. Cloth. Fifty Cents.
- PHARAOH.** By Mary De Mankowski, author of "Ten Years in Cossack Slavery." Cloth, 12mo. \$1.25.
- FITTED AGAINST ANARCHISTS.** By W. Fretz Kemble. Cloth, 12mo, 118 pages. Fifty Cents.
- POCKET ISLAND. A Story of Country Life in New England.** By Charles Clark Munn. Cloth, 12mo, fully illustrated, 200 pages. Third and Revised Edition. One Dollar.
- POETICAL WORKS.** By Louis M. Elshemus. Daintily produced. Cloth, 12mo. Two Dollars.
- PRAIRIE FLOWER, A.** By Alice Pierson. Cloth, small 12mo, 88 pages. Fifty Cents.
- PRIEST AND A WOMAN, A.** By Landis Ayr. Cloth, 12mo, 268 pages. One Dollar.
- PRINCE OF THE EAST, A.** By James W. Harkins, Jr. Cloth, 12mo, 324 pages. One Dollar.
- PSYCHOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE.** By the Rev. South G. Preston. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- PUPPET SHOW, THE.** By Leonidas Westervelt. Second Edition. Cloth, 12mo, 219 pages. One Dollar.
- QUAKER SCOUT, A.** By N. P. Runyan. Second Edition. Cloth, 12mo, 277 pages. \$1.25.
- QUEEN OF APPALACHIA, THE.** By Joe H. Borders. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- QUO WARRANTO.** By Henry Goodacre. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- RACE WITH A HURRICANE, A.** By Alice Miriam Roundy. Cloth, small 12mo, 101 pages. Fifty Cents.
- REALITY AND OTHER POEMS.** By Duncan F. Young. Cloth. Seventy-five Cents.
- REPUBLIC OF AMERICA, THE.** By L. B. Hartman. Cloth, 12mo, 116 pages. Fifty Cents.
- ROMANCE AND ROME.** By Almus Hugh Edwards. Cloth, small 12mo, 108 pages. Fifty Cents.
- ROMANCE IN MEDITATION, A.** By Elaine L. Field. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- SECRET OF HAMLET, THE.** By the Rev. South G. Preston. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS.** By M. Frances Hanford Delaney. Illustrated. Cloth, 12mo, 196 pages. One Dollar.
- SHADOW OF THE KING, THE.** By the Rev. South G. Preston. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- SHRINE OF SILENCE, THE.** A Book of Meditations. By Henry Frank. Cloth, 12mo. Daintily produced. \$1.50.
- SINGULAR SINNER, A.** By Charles R. Harker. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.

ABBAY PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- SLAVEHOLDER'S DAUGHTER, A.** By Belle Kearney. Cloth, 12mo, 270 pages. Illustrated. Fourth Edition. One Dollar.
- SOCIAL SINNERS.** A Realistic Novel of To-day. By Emile A. Pallier. Cloth, 12mo, 229 pages. One Dollar.
- SOCIETY QUICKSANDS.** By Kate Davis. Cloth, small 12mo, daintily produced. Fifty Cents.
- SOLDIER'S REVENGE, THE; OR, ROLAND AND WILFRED.** By Florence N. Craddock. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- SOME PEOPLE WE MEET.** By Charles F. Rideal. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. Twenty-five Cents.
- SONGS FROM NATURE.** By Daniel M. Peters. Cloth, 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- SONGS NOT SET TO MUSIC.** By Kate Mills Fargo. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- SOUL GROWTH.** By Barnetta Brown. Cloth (Miniature), daintily produced. Twenty-five Cents.
- SOUL SAINTS AND SWEET SINNERS.** By Carlos Martyn. Third Edition. Cloth. 12mo, 245 pages, with photograph and biographical sketch of the author. One Dollar.
- STONER FAMILY, THE.** By Samuel Fulton. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- STORY OF JESUS FOR CHILDREN, THE.** By Louise Castle Walbridge. Cloth, 12mo. Fully illustrated. One Dollar.
- STRANGER, THE.** By Mattie Balch Loring. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- STUDIES IN ESCHATOLOGY.** By U. S. Bartz. Cloth, small 12mo, 86 pages. Fifty Cents.
- SUNSHINE BOOKS.** By Barnetta Brown. Cloth, daintily produced, 25 Cents each; six in a set (neatly boxed), \$1.50.
- SWEETBRIER.** By L. M. Elshemus. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated by the author. One Dollar. Paper, Fifty Cents.
- TABBY'S DEFENCE.** By Harriet Elliot. Attractively produced. Fifty Cents.
- TEMPER CURE, THE.** By Stanley Edwards Johnson. Cloth. 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- TEN YEARS IN COSSACK SLAVERY.** By Mary De Mankowski. Cloth, 230 pages. \$1.25.
- THE WHY OF POVERTY.** By G. H. Hubbard. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- THOUGHTS IN VERSE.** By Duncan Francis Young. Cloth, 12mo, daintily produced. Seventy-five Cents.
- THREE FAIR PHILANTHROPISTS.** By Alice M. Muzzy. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.50.
- THROUGH STRESS AND STORM.** By Gregory Brooke. Cloth, 12mo, specially designed cover. One Dollar.
- TOBACCO SMOKE.** By Clarence Oualey. Cloth, small 12mo. Illustrated. Fifty Cents.
- TOM HUSTON'S TRANSFORMATION.** By Margaret B. Love. Cloth, small 12mo, 92 pages. Fifty Cents.
- TRANSVAAL TROUBLE, THE.** By John Hays Hammond. Cloth. 12mo. Twenty-five Cents.
- TRAVELS OF A WATER DROP, THE.** By Mrs. James Edwin Morris. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- TRIPLE FLIRTATION, A.** By L. M. Elshemus. Cloth, 12mo, 260 pages. Illustrated. One Dollar. Paper, Fifty Cents.
- TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES WITH PALMISTRY.** By Julian Greer. Cloth. Twenty-five Cents.
- TWO MEN AND SOME WOMEN.** By Walter Marion Raymond. Cloth, 12mo, 160 pages. One Dollar.

ABBEE PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE

- UNCLE PHIL.** By Mrs. John M. Clay. Second Edition. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- UNIQUE TALES.** By M. Y. T. H. Myth. Cloth, neatly bound. Fifty Cents.
- UNO WHO.** By Elizabeth Stoughton Gale-White. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- VENGEANCE OF THE MOB, THE.** By Sam A. Hamilton. Cloth, 12mo, 206 pages. One Dollar.
- VERANA.** By Emil Weschcke. Cloth, neatly bound, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- VIOLA LIVINGSTON.** By Mary E. Payne. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- WEDDING BELLS AND OTHER SKETCHES.** By Nat Prune. Cloth, 12mo. Seventy-five Cents.
- WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE CHURCH?** By Frederick Stanley Root. Cloth, 12mo, 188 pages. One Dollar.
- WHAT WILL SHE DO?** By Margaret D. Simms. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- WHEN AT HOME AND SOCIETY GUIDE.** Giving Days when "At Home" of the Upper Classes. With a chapter on the etiquette of calls and callings. Cloth, Two Dollars. (In preparation.)
- WHITE MAN'S CHANCE, THE.** By Abbie Oliver Wilson. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- WHO ARE THE CRIMINALS?** By Henry George, Jr. Paper, Ten Cents. Cloth, Twenty-five Cents.
- WIDOW ROBINSON, THE, AND OTHER SKETCHES.** By Benjamin W. Williams. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- WITH A POLICEMAN IN SOUTH AFRICA.** By E. W. Searle. Cloth, 12mo. Illustrated. Seventy-five Cents.
- WOMAN'S PROTEST, A.** By Elsie Cassell Smith. Cloth, 12mo. One Dollar.
- WOMAN'S REVENGE, A.** By Law Muir. Cloth, small 12mo, 87 pages. Fifty Cents.
- WOODPILE RECOLLECTIONS.** By C. L. Olds. Cloth, small 12mo. Fifty Cents.
- WORRY AND CHEER.** By Barnetta Brown. Cloth (Miniature), daintily produced. Twenty-five Cents.

"One's Friend: One's Book
One's Best Friend: One's Best Book"
C. F. R.

ABBEY PRESS, 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

